

## HR Law Hotline

July 20, 2021

### BACK TO OFFICE? LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR A COVID-FREE WORKPLACE

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#### SUMMARY

While offices are bound to reopen in due course, employers have an obligation of duty of care towards their employees to provide for a safe and healthy workplace. Even with one case of COVID-19 infected employee, the entire workplace and their families can be at risk.

Several employers, especially in the IT/ITES sector have had a positive work from home (WFH) experience. However, as the second wave and related lockdown ends in several parts of the country, employers would be keen to require their employees to return to office. Apple has recently announced that its staff will be required to work at least three-days a week at their desks. Similarly, Amazon is expecting its employees in the U.S., U.K. and other countries to resume working on site, for at least three days a week.

HR managers have already started to plan return to offices. For an initial phase, employers are likely to prefer employees who are vaccinated, as they have lower risk of being infected with COVID-19 virus. With the vaccination drive being in an overtime mode in India and thanks to the introduction of Liberalised Pricing and Accelerated National COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy of the government, a majority of the employees are likely to be vaccinated in the next few months. India has administered more than 8 million COVID-19 vaccine doses on June 21, 2021, which is the highest single-day number of jabs in the world.

While offices are bound to reopen in due course, employers have an obligation of duty of care towards their employees to provide for a safe and healthy workplace. Even with one case of COVID-19 infected employee, the entire workplace and their families can be at risk

We are listing below certain legal considerations for HR managers in order to build a Covid-free workplace:

For complete article, please click [here](#).

— Archita Mohapatra & Vikram Shroff

You can direct your queries or comments to the authors

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