



Reopening the Law Firm

Timing, Considerations, and Policies

MICHELLE FRIENDS

TIM CORCORAN
[@tcorcoran](#)



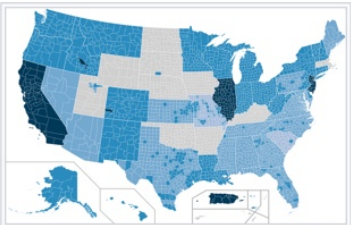
F **W** **FAIRFIELD AND WOODS** PC.

CORCORAN
CONSULTING GROUP

1

What Happened?

- Feb 29 – Washington State declares state of emergency
- Mar 11 – World Health Organization declares a pandemic
- Mar 16 – Federal issues stay at home guidelines
- Mar 19 – California issues first statewide stay at home order
- Businesses & law firms close, WFH commences
- Skeleton crews on site
- Technology adjustments and deployment
- Management begins re-prioritizing, conserving cash



States, territories, and counties that issued a stay-at-home order

- Came into effect before March 22
- Came into effect before March 29
- Came into effect before April 5
- Came into effect before April 12

[Full map including municipalities](#)

2

2

What's Next?

Apr 30 – Federal stay at home guidelines end, unless extended

Late Apr/early May – State stay at home orders end, unless extended

Eventually – Stay at home becomes “Safer at home”

Businesses and law firms re-open



3

Short Term Challenges (Today's Focus)

When to open

Who returns

On what schedule

Accommodations to be made – financial, logistical, physical, mental

How do we keep everyone safe

- In the office
- En route to the office

How do we prepare for inevitable setbacks



4

Longer Term Challenges (Future Focus)

How do we accommodate flexibility in our workforce

How do we manage a distributed workforce

How should our business model adapt

How should our client mix or practice mix shift

How has our definition of an ideal lawyer or business professional employee shifted

How has our definition of an effective leader or manager shifted

How has our definition of an ideal client shifted

What training, technology & communication investments do we need to make this easier

5

5

Getting ready to open

Supplies

Information Technology & Security

Building and office

Staffing model & scheduling

Childcare

Well-being

6

6

Supplies – Order Now!

Supplies

- Thermometers (Forehead)
- Gloves
- Masks
- Sanitizer for Conference Rooms/Individuals
- Clorox Wipes
- Toilet Paper (check with building)

Make sure everyone knows where to find these items

7

7

Information Technology & Security

Updated security and BYOD policies

Reminders about phishing, spoofing, scams

- Banks and vendors likely have relevant webinars/training available

Equipment pool inventory and access

- With limited inventory, may need to rotate/check in & out laptops, etc.

Technical support protocols

Training for new tools: Citrix, VPN, DMS, Time entry, Zoom, MS Meetings, etc.

8

8

Building & Office Considerations

Office

- Testing upon arrival (some are hiring nursing students for assistance)
- Modify workspace to facilitate social distancing (see CW in Resources)
- Keep heavy traffic interior doors open, consider one-way hallways
- Deliver supplies, copies & mail to workstation/office
- Initial deep clean and ongoing cleaning/sanitizing & maintenance
- Kitchen protocol – use of dishes, flatware, fridge, microwave
- Update Signage of CDC Recommendations, Office Policies

9

9

Building & Office Considerations

Office Services

- Limit access to mailroom, supply room, shared printer
- Conference room protocol
 - Bring your own supplies, remove chairs to ensure social distancing
- Access to storage for personal belongings
- Consider pausing shared newspaper/periodical subscriptions
- Light switch steward – one person to turn on/off lights each day
- Coffee and meal guidelines
 - Ice dispenser vs. maker, single cup vs. pot, individual vs. shared cream & sugar, etc.

10

10

Building & Office Considerations

Building

- Will your building be fully operational?
- Adjustments to building security
- Elevator access & protocol
- Cleaning crew options
- Lights and air back on
- Parking
- Delivery & messenger access
- Visitor policy

11

11

Staffing Model

Who must return, who returns upon request, who needs permission to return

Teams and rotations

- Know your state/city policies, some may conflict
- Rotating staff, limit those working in close proximity
- Default is to continue working remotely, not to rush everyone back to the office
- Michelle's approach: Teams of 5-7 people, structured with productivity in mind, 1/2 day shifts Mon/Wed, Tue/Thur, Fri-Sun access only by appointment/permission. Max of 1/3 of staff returning on 4 May, although CO governor "Safer at Home" policy allows up to 50%. No high-risk visitors!

Establish how to request/authorize changes to schedule, location, etc.

- Partners aren't allowed to overrule policies. Must escalate to CV-19 task force/management

12

12

Childcare

Update or establish policy, availability, space, costs, alternatives, exemptions

- May – no requirement to return
- June – Conf room for older children, younger children in office with parent
- Be careful to not operate like a daycare, unless that's your intention
- Programs to Monitor
 - YMCA Summer sports
 - Summer camps
- School Districts in Fall

13

13

Well-being & Mental Health

Make the return fun and comfortable

- Welcome back bags (sanitizer, wipes, masks, lotion, etc.)

Communicate security and health protocols, e.g., office cleaning

Casual Friday all May (likely all Summer)

Focus on Resilience (we've hired a consultant to run well-being sessions)

Remind employees of EAP benefits through health plans

We're all going to miss things! We're all going to make mistakes!

14

14

Sample Return to Work Policy

1. Do not take public transportation, please plan with management for on-site or nearby parking
2. Wear gloves and mask when entering the building
3. Do not get on crowded elevators. If possible, ride the elevator alone or with no more than 3 other people
4. With shorter shifts, we ask that no one prepares and consumes food in the lunchroom
5. Please do not read or congregate in the lunchroom, client lounge, conference rooms, or the mailroom. Do not visit with others in small offices. Practice social distancing when using a large conference room.
6. Practice Group and Committee meetings will still be held over Zoom. We also encourage the use of Microsoft Teams
7. Request supplies, copies, and mail be delivered to your workstation or office. Avoid or limit time in the mailroom
8. Access cards may be required for entry into the building. They are required for entry to the firm's floors
9. If you are showing signs of a cold, do not return to work. If you do return you will be sent home
10. Employees will need to self-quarantine for 14 days if they travel by air
11. Acknowledgment of this policy is required. By signing this policy, you acknowledge that you have not been in contact with anyone with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the 14 days immediately preceding your return to work

15

15

Near-term Considerations

Insurance coverage

When will visitors be allowed? (Will revisit in June)

Review staffing every two weeks. (Current CO limit is 50% workforce)

Work air travel policy. (No air travel. Will revisit in August)

Vacation air travel policy. (No air travel. Will revisit in August)

Building access policy. (We request no visitors in building. Card access control only)

Positive COVID-19 test protocol (We will shut down again if on-site worker is diagnosed)

Test protocol before allowing a return to work (CDC guidelines for demonstrating recovery)

16

16

Resources

PreventEpidemics.Org – When and How to Reopen After COVID-19

- https://preventepidemics.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COV020_WhenHowLoosenFaucet_v4.pdf?fbclid=IwAR34NqMIkifiA1IAj-xDiOHRg4onhz9xZXfn8Z4x-bXYAxIO3rROGWancs0

Getting Back to Work – Furia Rubel Communications

- <https://www.furiarubel.com/what-were-up-to/getting-back-to-work-in-the-coronavirus-world-what-is-the-new-business-as-usual/>

EEOC What You Should Know About COVID-19 and ADA, Rehabilitation Act & EEO Laws

- https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/wysk/wysk_ada_rehabilitaion_act_coronavirus.cfm?fbclid=IwAR1p8DM0qSlcPzozOB5UZ0IKk63VM02qq3ITITtYg99j04OUKvBv0FPAtkY

17

17

Resources

Association of Legal Administrators COVID-19 Response

- <https://www.alanet.org/about/media-center/coronavirus-response>

Legal Marketing Association Northeast Region COVID-19 Focus Group

- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/LMANECOVID19/>

Legal Marketing Association COVID-19 Collaboration & Resource Hub

- <https://www.legalmarketing.org/page/covid19-collaboration-&-resource-hub>

Legal Marketing Association Well-Being Resource Center

- <https://www.legalmarketing.org/page/well-being>

18

18

Resources

Cushman & Wakefield – Recovery Readiness Guide (including office reconfiguration)

- <https://www.cushmanwakefield.com/en/insights/covid-19>

American Bar Association COVID-19 Mental Health Resources

- https://www.americanbar.org/groups/lawyer_assistance/resources/covid-19-mental-health-resources/

Australasian Legal Practice Management Association COVID-19 Toolkit

- <https://www.alpma.com.au/useful-links-support-your-firm-through-covid-19-pandemic>

International Legal Technology Association COVID-19 Resources

- <https://www.iltanet.org/resources/areas-of-knowledge/covid-19>

19

19

Resources

RB Consulting – Resilience in the Midst of the COVID-19 Crisis

- <http://www.reneebranson.blog>

The Tilt Institute – When Crisis Calls: How Leaders Are Responding to COVID-19

- <https://www.thetiltinstitute.com/tilthink/2020/3/27/when-crisis-calls-how-lawyer-leaders-are-responding-to-covid-19>

Corcoran Consulting Group – Executive Committee guidance for profitable adaptation

- <http://www.bringintim.com>

COVID-19 Recovery Playbook

- <https://lawvision.com/client-resources/covid-19-recovery-playbook/>

20

20

Resources

CDC Guidelines for Businesses & Employers to Plan & Respond to COVID-19

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html>

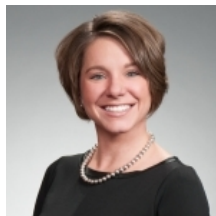
Supplies

- [Intivity.com](https://www.intivity.com) – masks, gloves, disinfectants
- [GetGarveys.com](https://www.getgarveys.com) – masks, gloves, disinfectants
- [Premier Supplies](https://www.premiersupplies.com) – masks, gloves, disinfectants
- [Joolamedical.com](https://www.joolamedical.com) – face masks
- [Geosyntec.com](https://www.geosyntec.com) – air quality consultants, HVAC, filters, etc.

21

21

Presenters



Michelle Friends
Executive Director
Fairfield & Woods, P.C.
Member, LMA Board of Directors
Past President, LMA Rocky Mountain
mfriends@fwlaw.com
(303) 830-2400
FWLaw.com



Tim Corcoran
Principal
Corcoran Consulting Group
LMA Past President, LMA Hall of Fame
Trustee, College of Law Practice Management
tim@bringintim.com
(609) 557-7311
BringinTim.com

22

22