

RETURNING TO PLACES AND SPACES



As social beings, we flourish when we connect. When we live, work and socialize together, we are more productive, creative and happier. We will get through COVID-19. We will return to our offices, classes, shopping malls, parks, transit stations, community centers, and the many other places where we collaborate and congregate. We will do this, however, with a new perspective and a revised set of expectations.

Our new reality will see users and visitors of shared spaces requiring a new level of safety, comfort and confidence. Assurance that spaces are safe and healthy will be critical. Rebuilding this confidence to re-establish full use and occupancy will take considerable effort—but it is possible.

A new focus on safety

At a minimum, building owners, employers and managers will need to implement the occupational health and safety standards enforced by the jurisdiction in which they operate. Although occupational health and safety has always been a priority for property owners and operators, the current pandemic will bring a new point of focus on these ever-evolving standards.

A comprehensive understanding and monitoring of the building environment—particularly for recently unoccupied buildings—provides insights into occupant



safety, indoor environmental quality and comfort issues. Assessing temperature, humidity and carbon dioxide data, as well as contaminants, air movement and ventilation through screening and monitoring, will provide a starting point to diagnose existing conditions. From there, ongoing monitoring procedures can be developed and future adjustments can be made to enhance performance.

An opportunity to lead

In this pivotal moment, we need to challenge ourselves to create the spaces where people will thrive. To do so we can look to best practices recommended in industry leading guides, including: CDC, ASHRAE, Health Canada, WELL, and Fitwell, among others. To clearly communicate a commitment to providing a healthy building, leaders will pursue formal certification under one or several of these programs.

Working together

At RWDI, we have established a working group specially focused on how to restart buildings effectively and efficiently—and safely. This group has developed building-restart guidelines to enable owners and managers to move quickly with confidence.

Our free webinar series offers more insights on this topic and more. Visit rwdi.com to watch on-demand content and register for live sessions. And, of course, we welcome your feedback on how we can best support you as you re-open your shared spaces and places.

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