



## Preparing for Layoffs Checklist

More information is available in our [Layoffs, Furloughs and More Fact Sheet](#).

*Consider the following when preparing for a layoff or Reduction in Force (RIF):*

- ☐ **Reason(s) for the layoff.** Is the layoff imperative or could reduction in hours or pay, reduction in force, or furlough meet your needs?
- ☐ **Train managers on how to support employees during this transition.** While organizational communication efforts will remain important, managers can directly offer support and encouragement to employees. Training sessions with managers should discuss how to listen effectively and how to offer transparent yet encouraging guidance to their teams.
- ☐ **Contractual commitments.** Are any persons to be laid off parties to an employment contract or covered by a collective bargaining agreement?
- ☐ **Number of people involved.** How many persons will be laid off? What will be the impact of the reduction in force on the work of remaining employees?
- ☐ **Departments involved.** If you're organized into departments, how will the layoff affect various departments?
- ☐ **Use objective layoff criteria.** You must use objective criteria, e.g., performance, seniority, job elimination, particular skills needed by company, in determining which employees will be laid off to avoid claims of discrimination, etc.
- ☐ **Layoff policy.** Determine what regular pay, severance, vacation pay, or other benefits will be paid. Will you cover health insurance until the end of the month or for a longer period? Check your policies.
- ☐ **Advance notice.** How much, and how, will it be given? (Check federal WARN requirements as well as CalWARN.) Consider how to communicate with any remote workers who are impacted (video call, meet them in person, etc.)
- ☐ **Voluntary separation.** Find out whether anyone wishes to quit voluntarily, or if employees of retirement age wish to take early retirement. Determine amount of severance pay or retirement incentives to be offered, if any.
- ☐ **Return Rights.** Will laid off employees be considered for re-employment at a later date with more rights than non-employees who may apply for a position? Consider COVID-19 Recall rights for specific industries and collective bargaining agreements.



- ☐ **Benefits.** Make arrangements regarding medical and life insurance coverage, if applicable. Review pension plans if you have them. Provide insurance conversion forms and send COBRA or comparable state-mandated notifications. Prepare an information sheet to hand out to employees regarding what benefits they will have and for how long.
- ☐ **Involving IT proactively**—Before conducting remote layoffs, communicate with IT about removing the laid-off employee's access to internal networks. Since equipment won't be able to be collected immediately, it will be necessary to conduct IT tasks remotely. Let IT know of any required actions in advance to ensure that tasks can be completed in a timely manner while avoiding missteps.
- ☐ **Creating specific follow-up actions**—There may be follow-up actions that need to take place, so don't hesitate. Such actions may need to be completed not only by the employer but also by the employee being laid off. Employers will want to plan for follow-up actions, such as mailing or shipping necessary materials.
- ☐ **Communication plan.** When an employer anticipates that the RIF or layoff will be temporary, the plan for the RIF should include a mechanism for staying in close contact with employees who may be eligible for rehire. The employer should keep the employees updated regularly.
- ☐ **Outplacement services.** Consider use of an outplacement service. If you are not using such a service, consider offering workshops in finding a job, writing a resume, and interviewing.
- ☐ **Unemployment insurance.** Provide employees with information on how to apply.
- ☐ **Final Pay.** It is a best practice to process the layoff as a separation from employment if the layoff will last longer than one pay period. Be prepared with all pay including accrued but unused vacation/PTO on the last day of work.
- ☐ **Calendar Alerts:** Create an alert or tickler to track when you may destroy the individual's I-9 form (the greater of 3 years after hire date or one year after separation) and when you are no longer required reinstate paid sick leave should they return (i.e., after one year of separation).