



## **COVID-19: IMPACTS ON BUSINESS**

Factories, offices, restaurants and airports reopen with new rules.

As coronavirus restrictions are gradually being eased across the world, businesses are allowed to reopen. But caution is still needed to avoid a new spike of infections. That is why companies, employees and customers will have to take new safety precautions to return to work.

Some of them, such as partitions in the eating area or frequent temperature checks, were hard to imagine a while ago.

### **New rules in airports and on planes**

Big US air companies are considering checking passenger temperatures before boarding, reports The Wall Street Journal. It is however unclear whether it is air carriers or airport security control that will be in charge of the process. American Airlines is also looking for ways to reduce contacts between people at boarding or during the flight. Passengers may be allowed to take snacks and drinks onboard on short-haul flights to avoid food service.



*Big US air companies checking passenger temperatures before boarding.*

## **Testing factory workers**

Tyson, the largest US meat processor, deploys walk-through temperature scanners at its facilities across the country. According to Hector Gonzalez, Tyson's senior vice president of human resources, the company may consider continuing to use them after the pandemic is over to reduce flu infections among its employees.

Toyota plans to slow down conveyor belts at its US facilities, driven by a sharp drop in demand for cars and the need for social distancing. The car maker and its rival General Motors is poised to introduce testing of their employees for the coronavirus or antibodies to it. This will, however, be more challenging to implement, admits Chris Reynolds, Toyota's chief administrative officer for manufacturing and corporate resources.

Meanwhile, in Spain, where some factories returned to operation on 13 April, Siemens Gamesa, a manufacturer of wind turbines, pledged to offer testing for antibodies to all employees once it is available, reports Reuters. Spain also made it compulsory for all workers to wear masks.



*Factories deploying walk-through temperature scanners and testing employees for the coronavirus or antibodies to it.*

Companies adjust shift hours at their factories and even ask employees to eat lunch inside their cars to avoid crowding in the canteen, according to WSJ. The latter caused trouble for Amazon. In spring, the e-commerce giant announced it was planning to hire additional 175,000 workers to its warehouses and delivery chain to handle a surge in online orders. But many Amazon's employees refused to go to work over the fear of being infected, complaining that they had to work too close to each other. Amazon claimed that it provided protective masks to all employees and arranged temperature checks daily. In April, the company announced it was going to build a lab to test its employees for COVID-19.

---

COMPANIES ADJUST SHIFT HOURS AT THEIR FACTORIES AND EVEN ASK EMPLOYEES TO EAT LUNCH INSIDE THEIR CARS TO AVOID CROWDING IN THE CANTEEN

---

## **Partitions in offices and restaurants**

Social distancing is a pressing issue for office workers too. This is of particular concern to companies with open plan offices. Some are planning to introduce rotating shifts when one group of employees will work from office and the other from home and then change places.

Cushman & Wakefield, a real estate services firm, is testing another concept at its Amsterdam office, according to WSJ. It used plexiglass dividers between desks and signs to indicate the direction to follow to ensure employees keep approximately 2 metres away from each other. Desks are covered by disposable pads to catch germs.

Restaurants, among which is Texas Roadhouse steak house chain, are planning to install wooden or glass partitions between tables and space out guests. On top of that, visitors will have to queue outside or wait in their cars until a table becomes free.



*Restaurants installing wooden or glass partitions between tables and spacing out guests.*

---

## RESTAURANTS, AMONG WHICH IS TEXAS ROADHOUSE STEAK HOUSE CHAIN, ARE PLANNING TO INSTALL WOODEN OR GLASS PARTITIONS BETWEEN TABLES AND SPACE OUT GUESTS

---

Starbucks is borrowing from its lessons learnt in China, where 95% of the cafe chain have reopened. The company introduced reduced hours, limited seating and more frequent cleanings. This is the model Starbucks is using across all its stores globally, according to Kevin Johnson, its chief operating officer.

### **Safe entertainment**

Sports leagues are hoping to play the remaining games of the season not to lose revenue from broadcasting. Yet, teams will have to prepare to play in empty stadiums.

Cinema chains are less lucky as there is not much sense in showing films to empty seats. Their owners are now in talks on reopening with US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), according to WSJ. They are counting on people getting used to sharing space with dozens of strangers. Big chains are keen to woo customers back to the big screen, offering discounts on tickets. Guest capacity will have to be reduced though to enable social distancing.

Walt Disney was able to reopen its Shanghai theme park on a limited basis. All guests must wear face masks and are allowed to take them off only to have meals. The company reduced working hours and limited access to the park. "In order to return to some semblance of normal, people will have to feel comfortable that they're safe", even if it causes some inconvenience, said Bob Iger, executive chairman of The Walt Disney Company, in an interview to Barron's.

Source: Vedomosti (<https://www.vedomosti.ru/economics/articles/2020/04/15/828113-kak-menyaetsya-rabota>)

