

Austin Chamber of Commerce offers tips for businesses looking to reopen office spaces

By Brittany Ford | Friday, May 15, 2020

Austin, Texas — Several large and small corporations in Austin are looking to ease into reopening office spaces.

The Austin Chamber of Commerce is offering its support. The agency held a 'Re-opening your office space' webinar Friday, highlighting safety tips for businesses. Social distancing practices, deep cleaning, and office visitors were just some of the topics discussed.

One of the main topics; liability. "The important benefit of reducing liability which is something that many of us are really worried about," said Attorney Pam Madere with Jackson Walker, LLP.

Madere said one of the first things a business should do is create a liability plan. She says there are currently several loopholes in the law regarding COVID-19 and the workplace. "Some of the lawsuits we've seen so far across the nation -- failure to properly screen employees for COVID-19, failure to protect employees from others who have symptoms," Madere said.

She said it's important that businesses seek legal advice. "It's something that I think is going to be very important. A qualified employment lawyer or other expert consultant whose really focused in this area."

Madere said that includes staying up-to-date with the CDC's latest guidelines. "It's not enough to look at the rules now and put your plan in place. You're going to have to evolve your plan with the evolving regulations," she said.

The chamber said creating a solid plan will help keep businesses stay protected. "We're all in this together, work with the ownership of your building, and don't forget to ask questions. There are no dumb questions," commented one of their members.