

# BACK TO BUSINESS

**WMC**  
Wisconsin's Chamber

## BACK TO BUSINESS

### *A Plan to Protect Lives, Livelihoods and Wisconsin's Future*

Wisconsin is ready to get back to business. Much of the state's economy has been shut down since March 25, when Gov. Tony Evers' Safer at Home order went into effect. At the time, the governor took swift action to protect the lives of Wisconsinites. The time-frame was meant to cover two 14-day incubation periods to drastically slow the spread of COVID-19. With the governor's initial Safer at Home order expiring at 8AM on April 24, it is now time to also protect livelihoods.

To do this, Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce (WMC) – the combined state chamber, manufacturers' association and safety council – is releasing this plan to get Back to Business. It is designed to strategically open Wisconsin businesses based on a number of risk factors and offers employers a clear vision for when and how they can begin to operate, once again.

The Back to Business plan was developed with input from a diverse group of stakeholders, including those in business, government and the medical community. Additionally, it draws on best practices and recommendations from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).



## THE BREAKDOWN

WMC's Back to Business plan is tactical as opposed to one-size-fits-all. As the science has shown, different parts of Wisconsin are being impacted in much different ways. According to the latest information available, 48 percent of Wisconsin's confirmed COVID-19 cases have been in Milwaukee County. Meanwhile, seven Wisconsin counties have yet to report a confirmed case.

That is why the Back to Business plan takes a data-driven approach with reopening the economy. For example, there is a much higher risk of spreading the infection at a barber or hair salon in Milwaukee County than there is at a barber or hair salon in Vernon County. In simple terms, the risk factors associated with doing the same activity in two different places are vastly different due to infection rates and population density.

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## BACK TO BUSINESS PLAN (cont'd)

Another risk factor to consider is the type of business reopening. Different businesses have different concentrations of people interacting in close proximity to each other. For example, attending a concert is likely a higher risk for Wisconsinites than working in an office with cubicles separating workers. Drinking a beer after work with friends at a bar, furthermore, is likely a higher risk than working in a manufacturing facility where there is little interaction with others. The risks are different, but they are also manageable. The key is to manage them correctly to ensure workers and customers are protected. That is the essence of this plan.

Of course, the ability of our health care system to respond to the virus must also be a top priority. Just because people in Vernon County have a lower statistical risk of COVID-19 due to population density and the current rate of infection, the local health care systems may not be as ready to respond to an increased number of cases. The Back to Business plan accounts for this factor.

That is why WMC and its partners have developed a process for determining risk based on these outlined parameters. Using an algorithm, businesses in any corner of the state can quickly and simply determine their risk level, and understand what precautions they must take to safely reopen.



### HOW IT WORKS

Under the Back to Business plan, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) would provide a simple-to-use form on their website based on the Back to Business model. To determine what steps are needed to reopen, a business would enter three things:

- ✓ Company Name
- ✓ Wisconsin County
- ✓ 6-Digit NAICS Code

After submitting the form, the platform would automatically use four factors to determine the level of risk for that specific company:

- ✓ Infection Rate in County of Operation
- ✓ Population Density of County of Operation
- ✓ Interactive Concentration (Based on NAICS Code Business Sector)
- ✓ Health Care Capacity/Utilization in County of Operation

Companies would be given a risk factor of minimal, moderate or substantial based on an in-depth analysis of more than 300 NAICS codes and various data points from public health sources.

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## BACK TO BUSINESS PLAN (cont'd)

The higher the risk, the more precautions businesses would be required to take to avoid further spread of COVID-19. Precautions can include, but are not limited to social distancing among employees and customers, operating at reduced capacity, increasing use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and stepping up cleaning procedures.

By using this data-driven algorithm, Wisconsin businesses could open in a safe and strategic manner. Additionally, because the platform relies on readily available government health data, it can be updated in real time every day. As portions of Wisconsin slow their infection rates, more businesses could begin to operate with fewer restrictions. On the other hand, if there is an outbreak or sudden increase in infection rates, businesses in that area would have to operate on stricter guidelines. The model adapts to changing public health conditions to either dial-up or dial-down businesses' safety requirements – a nimble approach not found in other plans.

### CONCLUSION

A global health crisis has created an economic crisis. WMC's Back to Business plan offers a solution that both protects lives and livelihoods. It understands the seriousness of the health risks, while providing hope and optimism for countless employers and hundreds of thousands of Wisconsinites out of work.

This plan calls for Wisconsin to get Back to Business on Monday, May 4 under the guidelines proposed. This will give businesses time to recall furloughed employees, contact suppliers and take other necessary steps to open their doors. It will also give DHS and other government agencies time to build, test and launch the portal necessary for businesses to determine their risk level.

With the health of Wisconsin's residents and economy in mind, a bipartisan approach to implement this plan could get the state back on the road to recovery.

Now is the time to protect lives, livelihoods and Wisconsin's future. Let's get Back to Business.

See Attached:

*WMC Back to Business Presentation*

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# BACK TO BUSINESS PLAN (cont'd)

## MODEL ADVANTAGES

- ✓ **TACTICAL:**  
Provides businesses with steps they can take to protect employees and customers
- ✓ **GRANULAR:**  
Assigns industry-specific risk factors to businesses based upon 311 different NAICS codes
- ✓ **CUSTOMIZED:**  
Assigns risk based upon circumstances unique to a local county or region, instead of a one-size-fits all approach statewide
- ✓ **DATA DRIVEN:**  
Utilizes trusted data from public health regulators and medical professionals
- ✓ **SIMPLE:**  
Easy to understand for employers, employees and customers alike
- ✓ **CREDIBLE:**  
Risk and mitigation factors are based upon CDC and OSHA guidelines, with additional input from the medical community
- ✓ **RESPONSIVE:**  
Adjusts risk factors and mitigation requirements in real-time based upon current public health data
- ✓ **PROTECTIVE:**  
Gives workers and customers the confidence to safely reengage in the economy
- ✓ **FORWARD-LOOKING:**  
Assigns risk factors based upon current hospital capacity, medical supply inventory and resources to prevent overwhelming systems locally

