Responding to Coronavirus

February 2020

An Aon Pulse Survey on HR Policies Related to the COVID-19 Epidemic

Given the rapid spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus), some local governments in China are forcing companies to postpone the resumption of work after the Chinese New Year holiday. Organizations with operations in China are assessing this rapidly evolving situation and determining the right response for their employees, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders.

To aid companies in their decision making during the coronavirus epidemic, Aon conducted a pulse survey of companies in China on their plans for when and how employees will return to work.

The coronavirus outbreak is still changing rapidly, and in many cases, plans for resuming work activities are still under constant evaluation. We recommend companies continue to develop and amend their approach with the latest central and local government requirements, while also recognizing that these official policies are always subject to change as this situation continues to unfold.

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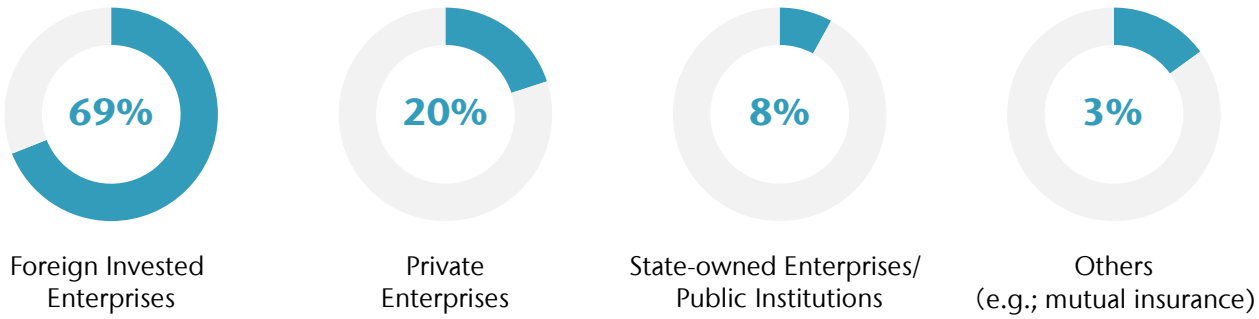
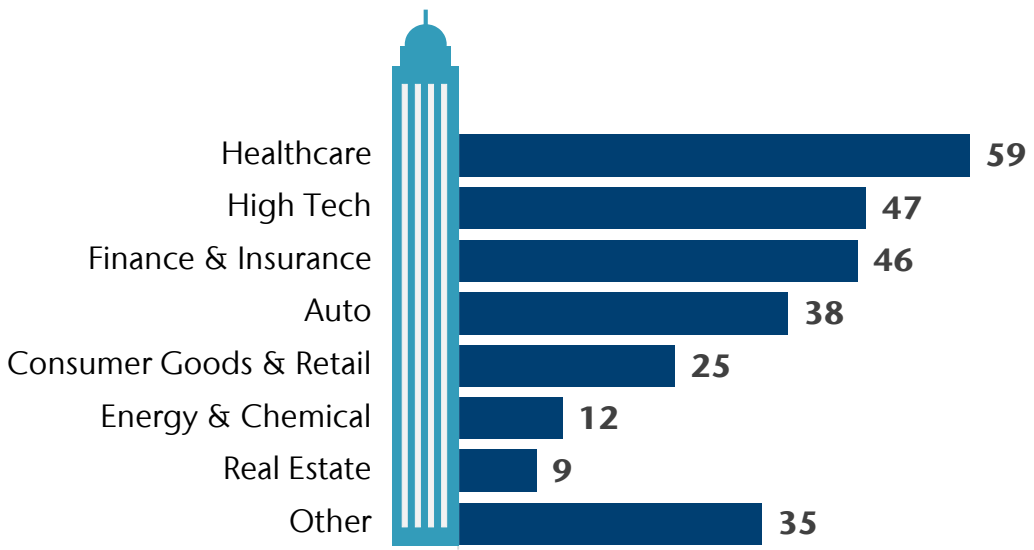
Survey Demographics

In January and February 2020, Aon collected responses from 271 companies in China, including multinational, private, and state-owned enterprises. Eighty-three percent of respondents have at least one office in Beijing or Shanghai, while 30% of them have offices in Hubei Province, which is most affected by the coronavirus outbreak.

Distribution of Participants by Business Entity Type



Industry Distribution of Participants



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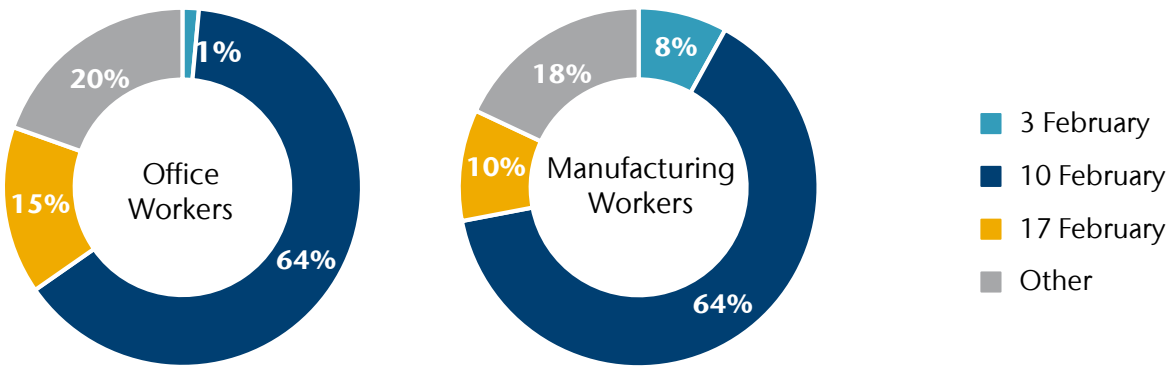
Return to Work Timelines

The majority of respondents plan for employees to return to work on February 10 while a few companies expect workers will return to work in March. A small number of manufacturing employees returned to work on February 3. Most organizations with employees in provinces at the epicenter of the outbreak, including Hubei, Zhejiang, Guangdong and Henan, require a quarantine of 7 to 14 days.

What is the planned return to work date for your employees?

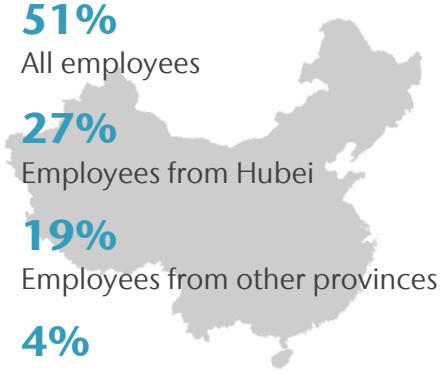


n = 271

n = 213

Note: Other category includes companies that have not decided on a return to work date, employees applying for more remote working time, companies applying for resumption to local authorities, etc.

Does your company require employees to self quarantine before returning to work?



51%
All employees

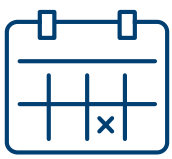
27%
Employees from Hubei

19%
Employees from other provinces

4%
No quarantine

Quarantine time after returning to work

78%	14 days
8%	7 days
19%	14 days for those in key epidemic areas while 7 days for those in other areas; operate according to local regulations



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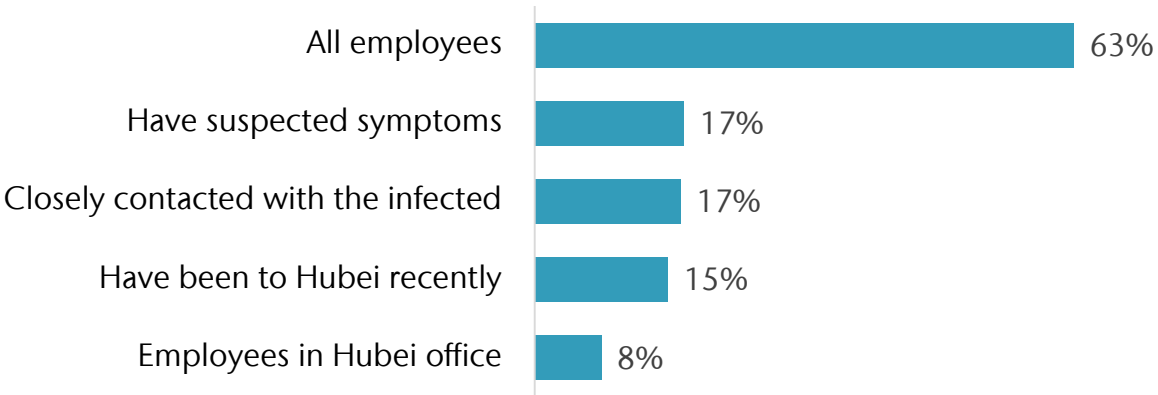
Work from Home Arrangements

Some enterprises require employees who are returning to work from other cities or employees who can work from home to work from home for a certain period of time.

Most employees are receiving full pay while working from home, with a small percentage earning overtime pay.

What type of employees are most suitable to work from home?



How does your company treat compensation for employees working from home?

87%	4%	7%	2%
Total remuneration	Overtime payment	Other	Not applicable

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Extra Health and Welfare Benefits

Survey respondents are providing the following benefits to employees during the coronavirus epidemic:

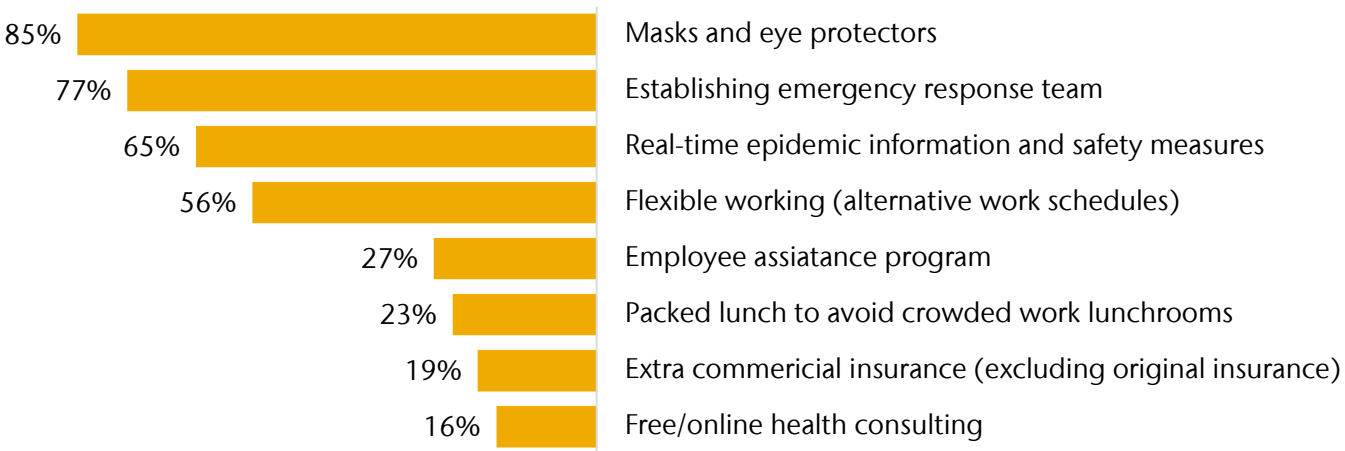
36% providing extra employee benefits

16% adding related liability clauses to current employee insurance policy

9% paying a condolence fee to employees infected with the new coronavirus

9% providing child care leave during the epidemic

What extra benefits is your company offering?



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Supporting Expat Employees

Does your company have special arrangements for foreign employees?

71%
No special arrangements

24%
Prolong remote working time

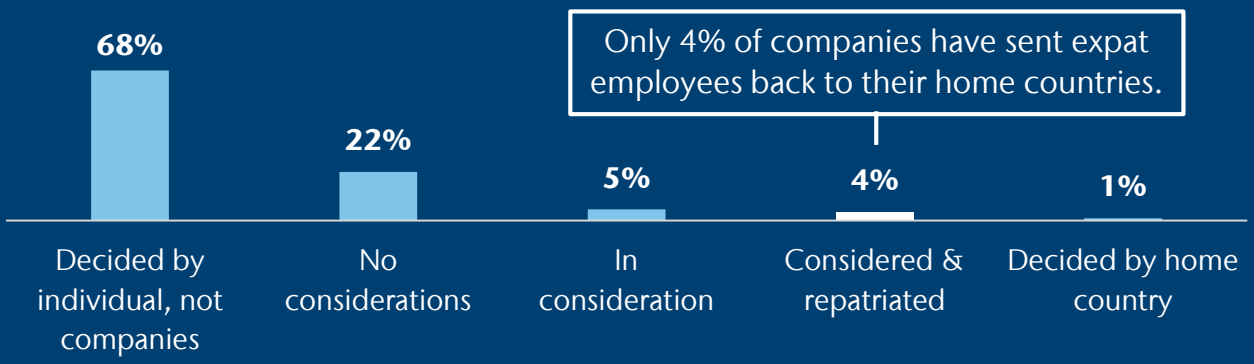
5%
Others, such as arrange for them to go back to their homeland

0.5%
Provide extra holidays

0.5%
Provide extra allowance

The majority of the 191 respondents with expat employees are maintaining consistent arrangements for foreign and local employees.

Is your company considering arranging repatriation for foreign employees?



How will you respond if your company decides to repatriate foreign employees and their current insurance plans do not cover medical fees in their home country?

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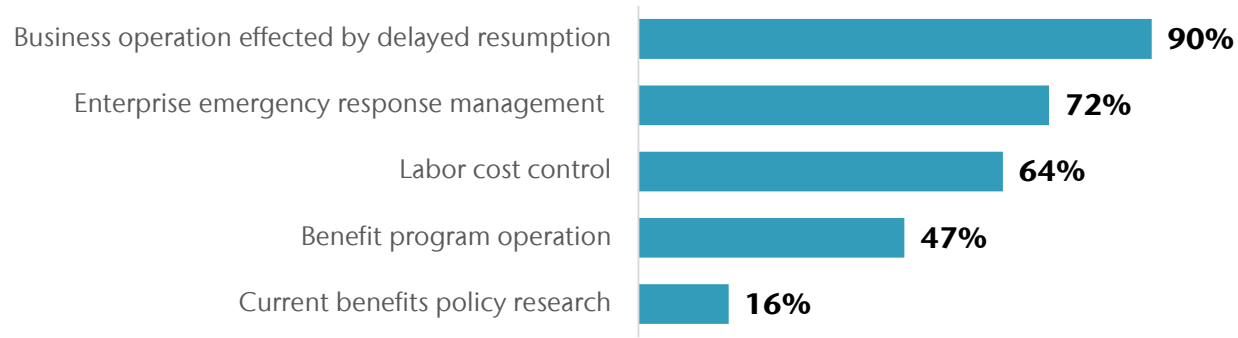
Emergency Management Plans

What are the challenges for human resources under the epidemic?



When emergencies happens, organizations can effectively maintain business continuity by taking the following actions.

Assess Current HR Policies

Assess human resource policies relating to absenteeism, payroll, healthcare and disability. Make necessary changes in light of the outbreak, being mindful of changing local and central laws.

Establish Emergency Response Group

Appoint an emergency response group that can spring into action during situations like the current epidemic. The team should assist different departments, including human resources, ensuring that internal communication is effective and timely.

Manage Daily Business Operations

Coronavirus is highly contagious and has a long latent period. Companies should consider establishing a health reporting system that takes employees' temperatures and keeps records in order to know and report employees' health condition.

Implement a Comprehensive Communication Strategy

Communicate with employees in a timely and transparent manner, including guidance to employees with suspected symptoms and information on how the epidemic is impacting operations and revenue. An external communication policy is equally important. Inform stakeholders about how business operations are affected by coronavirus.

For questions about this survey or help developing HR policies in response to the coronavirus epidemic, please contact:
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