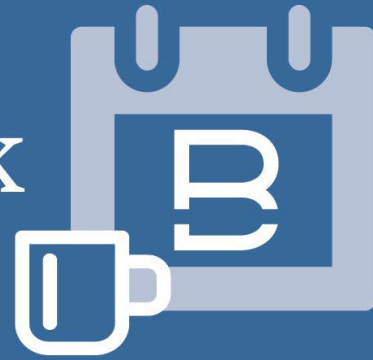# The Work Week

Bassford Remele Employment Practice Group

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Welcome to another edition of *The Work Week with Bassford Remele.* Each Monday morning, we will publish and send a new article to your inbox to hopefully assist you in jumpstarting your work week.

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More Employers are Pushing for Return to Office Policies
Michael J. Pfau

Over the last few years as the Covid-19 Pandemic receded, employers have been deciding whether to embrace a full remote policy, a hybrid policy, or a full return-to-office policy. Still a hot topic issue, the national news cycle frequently includes a major U.S. employer announcing some iteration of a new policy related to remote work. As we begin to wind down 2024, we checked in on the status of remote work trends and what to expect as we head into 2025.

The Current State of Remote Work

Remote work continues to be a significant part of the modern workforce, with many companies adopting flexible models. According to the Pew Research Center, around 22 million employed adults in the U.S. work from home full time, equal to roughly 14% of all employed adults. Just over one-third of workers in the U.S. who can work remotely do so all the time while 41% are at least part-time remote on a hybrid setup.

Employers are Pushing for Returning to the Office

Amazon, one of the largest employers in the U.S., recently announced it expected workers to return to the office five days a week. Currently, Amazon workers have been reporting to their physical offices three days a week. Other major companies, including Citigroup, Walmart, and UPS, are requiring employees to spend more time in the office in recent months. However, the push faces resistance from employees who value flexibility, with many companies balancing these concerns through hybrid options.

A 2024 report by Flex Index said that 67% of Fortune 500 companies still offer flexible work. Only 18% require full-time in-office work.

Employer Considerations for Return to Office Policies

Creating a return-to-office policy requires a thoughtful approach that balances business needs with employee preferences. Employers are increasingly developing return-to-office policies to encourage in-office work, citing benefits like improved collaboration, mentorship, and company culture. However, flexibility remains key, with many companies opting for hybrid models that combine remote work with mandatory in-office days.

A strong return-to-office policy should clearly outline expectations, such as how many days employees are required to be in the office and which roles or teams must attend. It should also account for the evolving needs of the workforce, offering flexibility for those who need it while supporting company goals. Clear communication, addressing health and safety concerns, and soliciting regular feedback from employees are crucial to ensuring the policy is well-received and effective. But perhaps most importantly, employers need to be consistent with their policies, including enforcement of the same.

The Bassford Remele Employment Group can guide employers through the complexities of crafting effective return-to-office policies. Our experienced employment law attorneys help companies balance legal requirements with business goals, ensuring that return-to-office policies are compliant with employment laws and tailored to organizational needs. Please reach out with any questions.

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