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Manufacturers adjust to new safety protocols amid COVID-19

by Gabby Christensen

Implementing — and communicating — COVID-19 safety protocols has been critical for local manufacturers.

Pat Keenan, vice president of client relations at CapStone Technologies, said print mail companies are deemed as essential per federal guidelines and have used various tactics to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Some steps include taking temperature checks upon entry, mandating masks, allowing staff to work remotely with only true operational staff present on site, limiting outside vendors allowed into facilities and making hand sanitizers available in multiple locations.

Kevin Herrmann, CFO at REI, said the key has been incorporating COVID-19 protocols seamlessly into normal safety protocols.

When the pandemic was first declared, time was of the essence

and the company implemented several protocols based on U.S. Centers for Disease Control,

local and state guidelines including, but not limited to: social distancing, requiring the wearing of masks if within 6 feet of one another, installing clear barriers between employees on assembly lines and in other areas where social distancing was more challenging, providing PPE resources, purchasing special sanitizing equipment and cleaning frequently.

To the extent possible, Herrmann said doors were also left open to limit the touching of door handles.

“We’re offering more video conferencing opportunities to everyone in the organization, and we’re providing flexible work

schedules to those employees that could work from home,” he said.

Herrmann said it’s also important to provide regular updates on COVID-19 to the workforce.

“Manufacturers such as REI have many employees who need to be at the plant to perform their duties, so it was of critical importance to provide a safe environment for them,” he said. “Not only is it very impor-

tant for manufacturers such as REI to have safety protocols for COVID-19 but also to effectively communicate them to the employees and to communicate why we are implementing them. We strive for an environment where the employee is safe, feels safe and comfortable enough to be able to provide assurance to their families that they are working in



Keenan

a safe environment. Based on the lack of downtime and positive feedback from employees, we are confident that our communication and implementation of these new protocols have provided a positive outcome.”

Herrmann said it has been inspiring to see the workforce pull together to keep each other safe while continuing to work every day to provide products and service to customers.

“I think the key factors in dealing with issues like COVID-19 is to plan, communicate and implement, and then subsequently keep the lines of communication open with your employees,” he said.

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