

## Staggering Work and Home Quarantine: A Strategy for Measured Relaxation of Lockdown

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If did not happen on 4th May, at some point in the future the lockdown in India will have to be lifted to bring our economy back on its feet. If we go by the second wave of infections in Japan and Singapore, as people get back to work, we should expect that the disease will spread once again. Rather than employing ad-hoc mechanisms to manage the workforce, a planned and scientific method is necessary to minimize the rate of infections during the post lock down period. We propose a workforce management strategy that makes use of the

[research published so far on Covid-19](#) spread statistics. The proposed strategy is a combination of suppression and mitigation, with the objective of minimizing the rate of infection while enabling organizations to gradually bring their activities back online.

\_RSS\_ Before we talk about the proposed strategy, it is useful to understand suppression and mitigation strategies employed by countries around the world to fight the Covid-19 spread. A suppression strategy involves locking down large parts of the country (in case of India, the entire country) or the hotspots (like China) essentially to contain the virus spread to larger population. The mitigation strategy followed by Sweden (Turkey, Netherlands, and UK initially) on the other hand, allows most low risk people to work albeit with high levels of safety precautions and social distancing, with people at high risk, such as elderly and/or with comorbidities, are put under home quarantine. The idea here is to ensure economic activity while building herd immunity against the disease. Herd immunity is built when sufficient number of (>70% of the population) people get infected and get cured, or through [vaccination](#).

While the 'mitigation' strategy looks attractive from an economic standpoint, not many countries have opted for it due to the risk and uncertainty associated with the number of people who will need critical care. While India's suppression strategy seemed to have contained the spread for now in comparison to other countries, it has had a severe impact on the country's already struggling economy.

Estimates suggest that the first phase of lockdown for 21 days, has resulted in nearly 70% of the industry to shut down and a loss of Rs. 7 to 8 trillion to the economy. Both the suppression and mitigation strategies have their limitations and strengths. We propose a strategy that draws on the strengths of both, of moving towards herd immunity and rebuilding the economy, the specifics of the proposal draw upon information from multiple research reports. The proposed strategy involves dividing the workforce into multiple disjoint cohorts and isolating the cohorts from each other, so that the transmission rate can be kept to a manageable level.

Specifically, every organization that plans to resume activity will need to strategically divide the essential workforce into multiple but disjoint cohorts.


- For organizations following a 5-day work-week before the lockdown, we propose Option-I: a 4-day workweek post relaxation, and divide workforce into two disjoint cohorts, each cohort follows a work period of 4 days followed by a home quarantine period of 10 days
- For establishments that prefer to follow a 6-day work-week, we propose Option-II: a division of four disjoint cohorts with a work period of 3 days followed by a home quarantine period of 11 days
- Note that option-I will reduce the daily capacity to 50% and the work-week to 4 days. Whereas, option-II will reduce the daily capacity to 25%, and a work-week of 6 days.

**Option – I: 4-day work followed by 10-day home quarantine**

Week 1								Week 2						
Wk	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
WF I	O	O	O	O	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ
WF II	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	O	O	O	O	HQ	HQ	HQ

Week 3								Week 4						
Wk	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
WF I	O	O	O	O	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ
WF II	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	O	O	O	O	HQ	HQ	HQ

  
**Suggested Workforce Staggering Plan for 5-day week offices**  
 WF I – Work Force I, WF II – Work Force II  
 O – Work from Office, HQ – Home Quarantine

**Option – II: 3-day work followed by 11-day home quarantine**

Week 1								Week 2						
Wk	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
WF I	O	O	O	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ
WF II	HQ	HQ	HQ	O	O	O	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ
WF III	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	O	O	O	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ
WF IV	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	O	O	O	HQ

Week 3								Week 4						
Wk	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
WF I	O	O	O	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ
WF II	HQ	HQ	HQ	O	O	O	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ
WF III	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	O	O	O	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ
WF IV	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	HQ	O	O	O	HQ

**Suggested Workforce Staggering Plan for 7-day week offices**  
 WF I – Work Force I, WF II – Work Force II  
 WF III – Work Force III, WF IV – Work Force IV  
 O – Work from Office, HQ – Home Quarantine

What is the rationale for our proposal? Research studies based on COVID spread so far estimate that infected people are most contagious for about 3 days, starting from [4 days after being exposed](#). Therefore, allowing each cohort to work for 3 to 4 days and putting

them under strict home quarantine for a minimum of 10 days would ensure that they do not infect others at work. Of course, all precautions such as social distancing, face masks, other personal protective equipment demanded by specific job with frequent hand washing must be followed, as there is likely to be a small percentage of workers who become contagious within 3-4 days of getting exposed to virus. Also, people with visible symptoms of sickness must immediately be home quarantined until they get cured completely.

If implemented carefully, we conjecture that this strategy will ensure that economic activity continues to take place while moving towards herd immunity. By keeping infections manageable until a cure or effective vaccine is found, economic activity can be resumed without having to resort to a complete shutdown.

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