

Return from leave email template

Welcome an employee back from extended leave with a plan for the first days and any support they need.

Updated October 15, 2026. Written and reviewed by the HRTally Research Team.

When to use this template

Returning after parental, medical, or family leave can be hard. Projects moved on, teammates changed, and the employee may be adjusting to a new baby, a recovery, or a loss. A welcome-back plan helps them settle in and shows the company meant what it said about supporting leave.

Send this one to two weeks before the return date. Confirm the date, the schedule, any phased return or accommodation, and what the first week will look like. For new parents, include lactation accommodation details, which federal law requires. The manager should follow up with their own note and a catch-up meeting.

Version 1: Welcome back from leave

SUBJECT Welcome back on [Date]

Hi [Employee first name],

We are looking forward to having you back on [Return date]. I wanted to share a few details to make the return easier.

Your schedule: [Full schedule, or the phased return or reduced schedule you agreed on].

Your role: you are returning to your position as [Job title] with [Manager name].

Your first week: [Manager first name] has set up a catch-up meeting on [Day] to go over what changed while you were away. There's no expectation to clear your inbox on day one.

[For new parents: we have a private lactation room at [Location], and you can take breaks to pump as needed. Let me know if you need anything else set up.]

[If you need an accommodation for your return, let me know and we will work through it together.]

Is there anything that would help before you come back? Reply here or call me at [Phone].

Welcome back,
[HR contact]

Version 2: Manager welcome-back note

SUBJECT Glad you're back on [Date]

Hi [Employee first name],

I hope you are doing well. We are glad you will be back on [Date].

I have blocked an hour on [Day] for us to catch up on what's happened, what's next, and how you want to ease back in. [Coworker name] has a summary of the [Project] updates ready for you.

Please don't feel you need to catch up on everything at once.

[Manager name]

Subject lines to try

- Welcome back on [Date]
- Glad you're back on [Date]
- Planning your return
- Your first week back
- Welcome back: schedule and support

How to personalize it

- Confirm the return date and schedule in writing.
- Prepare a short summary of key changes.
- Offer lactation space and break time to returning parents.
- Check in again two weeks after the return.

Mistakes to avoid

- Expecting full productivity on day one.
- Making the employee ask for their old responsibilities back.
- Asking about medical details beyond what's needed for an accommodation.
- Comments about how much the team had to cover.

Legal and compliance notes

Under the FMLA, employees must be restored to the same or an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and terms. The PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act requires reasonable break time and a private space, other than a bathroom, for employees to express breast milk for one year after the child's birth.

Requests for a phased return or schedule change after a medical leave may be ADA or PWFA accommodation requests.

| When to send it

One to two weeks before the return date. Contact the employee earlier if you need to confirm the date or a fitness-for-duty certification.

| Before you hit send

- Dates, deadlines, and costs match the plan documents and carrier materials.
- Medical details stay between the employee and HR, not the manager or team.
- Required notices, such as FMLA forms or the Summary of Benefits and Coverage, are attached or scheduled.
- The employee knows exactly who to call, with a phone number.
- State leave programs and paid sick leave rules were checked for the employee's work location.

Find 73 more free HR email templates at hrtally.com/email-templates

Compare HR software, read independent reviews, and get free quotes at www.hrtally.com

Related: Leave approval, Leave request acknowledgment, Accommodation request acknowledgment