



A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS

Return-to-work (RTW) programs are based on the philosophy that many employees can safely perform productive work during the recovery process. Return to work benefits everyone in the workers' compensation system.

Benefits for employers

- Helps experienced employees get back to work in a safe and timely manner
- Reduces the cost of training replacement workers



- Helps maintain good employer/employee relationships
- Demonstrates to all workers that they're valued employees
- Reduces the length of time your employees are away from the work site

Benefits for workers

- Reduces financial uncertainty and concerns about their future with your firm
- Ensures a more complete recovery
- Helps employees maintain a sense of attachment with their co-workers

HOW TO FACILITATE A RETURN TO WORK

Tell employees about the program

Inform your employees about your company's return-to-work program, and explain how it can benefit them. When an injury occurs, let your employees know what to expect when they return to work. Talk to them about their role in the return-to-work process.

Be sure to show your injured employees that they're valued by staying in touch with them during all stages of the recovery process.

Set up a timeline

Developing a timeline sets an expectation of safe return to work. Being available to discuss alternative work duties with WorkSafeBC and the employee's physician facilitates the process. Your employee's physician helps to establish that timeline. Your goal is to coordinate a return-to-work plan with your employee and their physician.

The two most important elements of a proposed return-to-work plan are:

1. The earliest date your employee can safely return to alternate modified duties.
2. The date your employee can safely resume full duties.

Focus on employees' capabilities

A return-to-work plan focuses on an employee's abilities rather than restrictions. As the employer, you identify the tasks; the physician identifies the employee's physical capabilities. It is important that all parties understand what work duties the employee can and cannot safely perform.

Accommodate work transition

Your role is to facilitate and support the transition. Be willing to accept an employee at the work site who is less than fully recovered from injury. Some creativity and flexibility on your part may be required when matching job tasks to the injured employee's capabilities.

Transitional work takes into account your employee's capabilities, established timelines, and core job tasks. The sooner your employee returns to the work site, the sooner full recovery may be realized. WorkSafeBC staff are available to assist you in developing the best return-to-work plan possible to facilitate your employee's recovery process.



OTHERS INVOLVED IN RETURN-TO-WORK PLANNING

Return-to-work planning is a team effort. Many individuals can become involved in the process, including representatives from your firm, labour representatives, your employee, the employee's physician, a WorkSafeBC case manager, nurse advisor, and/or vocational rehabilitation consultant.

If your employee is enrolled in a WorkSafeBC-sponsored rehabilitation program, a rehabilitation therapist may contact you to discuss safe return-to-work opportunities. The therapist may also visit the work site and make recommendations on how to modify the work environment to suit your employee's capabilities.

During a WorkSafeBC-sponsored return-to-work program, your employee remains on benefits and coverage during the transition.

WHAT ABOUT RE-INJURY?

Employers and employees may have concerns regarding the possibility of being re-injured during a return-to-work program. Increased activity can result in increased pain, but doesn't necessarily mean re-injury. It may indicate the need for further medical treatment or assessment. Closely following the return-to-work plan can reduce the likelihood of the worker being injured again.

WORKSAFEBC IS HERE TO ASSIST YOU

As an employer, your role in return-to-work planning is to:

- Communicate with your employee about a modified work situation
- Identify suitable, safe work tasks for your employee
- Talk with your employee's physician about capabilities
- Talk with your employee's physician about suitable job tasks
- Contact your employee's assigned WorkSafeBC officer about the return-to-work plan

CONTACT INFORMATION

Visit our website at WorkSafeBC.com for more information.

RETURN TO WORK IS GOOD BUSINESS



WORK SAFE BC

WORKING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

WORK SAFE BC

WORKING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE
worksafebc.com