

SETTING UP A RETURN TO WORK PROGRAM

For help setting up a RTW program look for the document Disability and Risk Management Resource Guide on the WCB website at www.wcb.mb.ca under "Publications." The guide offers a list of organizations and services that provide assistance on a variety of RTW and disability management issues. Also, consider the following tips for creating a successful RTW program:

- present the RTW process as part of your company's benefits package and explain that you support helping workers with a timely return to health and work
- establish some RTW transitional work opportunities before they are needed
- consider job modification before injured workers return to their former jobs
- allow recovering workers to ease into the full work routine
- keep in touch with recovering employees and maintain a positive attitude toward their RTW
- focus on what the employees can do, not what they can't do
- have employees help to identify alternate and productive work
- ask for help from your WCB case manager if you need assistance.



SUMMARY

Workplace injuries and illnesses are costly to both workers and employers. Although preventing workplace injuries and illnesses should always be the first priority, a practical RTW program is one of the most effective ways to reduce both the human and financial costs when they happen.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba
Claim Information Centre
333 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 4W3

954-4100 or toll free 1-800-362-3340

Visit the WCB website at www.wcb.mb.ca for more information and other resources.



This document is available in large print format. Please call 954-4760, toll free 1-800-362-3340 or email info@wcb.mb.ca

Return to work for

Better BUSINESS



If you're hurt at work, we're here to help.

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RETURN TO WORK PROGRAMS REDUCE HUMAN AND FINANCIAL COSTS

Today's employers are increasingly recognizing the value of making changes to accommodate a safe and timely return to work (RTW) for injured workers. They promote a workplace culture that supports a safe and timely RTW by offering modified tasks, schedules and environmental conditions to meet the temporary or permanent needs of injured workers.

Returning to work following a workplace injury is a step by step process for the worker that starts right after they are hurt or become ill. The first step, of course, is to ensure they get the healthcare services they need to recover. The next step is to start planning for their return to work. Returning to work as soon as physically and safely possible can help injured workers recover more quickly.

BENEFITS

BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYERS

- keep their experienced workers connected to the workplace
- reduce the cost of training replacements
- minimize workers' compensation costs
- maintain productivity.

BENEFITS FOR WORKERS

- recover more rapidly from their injuries
- maintain their job stability
- get back on track sooner and with less uncertainty about the future.

HOW SHOULD THE EMPLOYER PARTICIPATE?

- the employer should manage the RTW process and involve the injured worker and his/her healthcare provider; a union and/or occupational health and safety committee representative may be included, along with the WCB when requested
- the RTW team develops a plan to help the injured worker return to work safely, within established timelines
- the RTW plan should be customized to the injured worker, take into consideration his/her capabilities and limitations, and reflect the recommendations of the healthcare provider
- the employer should keep in touch with the injured worker and support him/her in the return to work plan.

RE-EMPLOYMENT OBLIGATIONS

Effective January 1, 2007, legislation requires employers who have 25 or more full-time or regular part-time workers to re-employ injured workers who were in their employ for at least 12 continuous months prior to their injuries. For more information on re-employment obligations please check online at www.wcb.mb.ca under publications, or call 954-4321 or toll free 1-800-362-3340 for a copy of the pamphlet *Re-employment Obligations*.

HOW SHOULD THE INJURED WORKER PARTICIPATE?

- the injured worker should take an active part in the RTW plan as agreed during all discussions
- he/she should attend all healthcare appointments, follow the prescribed treatment plan and help the healthcare provider understand the type of work they do
- the injured worker should keep in touch with the employer and the WCB worker to let them know how their recovery is progressing.

HOW SHOULD THE HEALTHCARE PROVIDER PARTICIPATE?

- the healthcare provider should recommend timelines for the injured worker's return to work and his/her limitations
- timelines should indicate the earliest date for a safe return to modified tasks or hours of work
- the healthcare provider will share information about the injured worker's limitations only with his/her consent.

WCB PARTICIPATION

- the WCB worker will monitor the RTW plan and assist with benefits for the injured worker
- the WCB worker will become involved to assist in the RTW plan if requested - we're here to help.