

## 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 WCB case manager, a WCB nurse adviser and/or vocational rehabilitation consultant.

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

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

## WHAT ABOUT RE-INJURY?

Both employers and employees may express 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 monitoring the return-to-work plan can effectively reduce the likelihood of the worker being injured again.

## WCB IS HERE TO ASSIST YOU

In the vast majority of cases, a return-to-work plan is consistent with the physical, emotional and social well being of your employee. 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 WCB officer about the return-to-work plan

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Interior and B.C. Northern Call Centre

Phone 250 717-4301, Toll free | 888 922-6622

### Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, and Terrace Call Centre

Phone 604 231-8888, Toll free | 888 967-5377

### If you are a worker, please direct your correspondence to:

PO Box 4700 Stn Terminal

Vancouver BC V6B 1J1

Toll free fax | 888 922-8807

Greater Vancouver fax 604 233-9777

### If you are an employer, please direct your correspondence to:

PO Box 8940 Stn Terminal

Vancouver BC V6B 1H9

Toll free fax | 888 922-8803

Greater Vancouver fax 604 233-9722

Visit the WCB web site at [www.WorkSafebc.com](http://www.WorkSafebc.com) for more information.

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[www.WorkSafebc.com](http://www.WorkSafebc.com)



## A CHANGING APPROACH TO RETURN TO WORK

Return-to-work (RTW) programs are based on the philosophy that many employees can safely perform productive work **during** the process of recovery. This brochure outlines the process and your role in the return-to-work planning of your injured employees.

Today there are significant changes in return-to-work thinking on the part of employers, labour, the WCB, and medical and rehabilitation health care professionals.



Progressive and innovative employers are making safe productive transitional work available as a form of “therapy”.

## BENEFITS BOTH EMPLOYER AND WORKER

Return to work benefits everyone in the workers' compensation system. Besides retaining healthy, qualified employees, an employer can save money through “loss prevention”.

### Benefits of a return-to-work program for employers

- Returning an experienced employee to work in a safe and timely manner
- Reducing the costs of training replacement workers
- Maintaining a good employer and employee relationship
- Demonstrating to all workers that they are valued employees
- Reducing the length of time your employee is away from the work site

### Employees who participate in a return-to-work program also benefit

- Impact of financial uncertainty on the employee and their family and concerns about their future with your firm are reduced
- Recovery is more complete
- A sense of attachment with their co-workers can be maintained

## HOW TO FACILITATE THE RETURN-TO-WORK PROCESS

### Tell employees about RTW program

Inform your employees about your company's return-to-work program for injured employees, and explain that it can help them return safely to work. If or when an injury occurs, let your employees know about what to expect when they return to work. Talk to them about their role in the return-to-work process.

You can demonstrate to injured employees that they are 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 the WCB and the employee's physician to return your employee to safe and durable work 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 objectives 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.

## Work based on 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 identified capabilities of your injured employee.

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. WCB staff is available to assist you in developing the best return-to-work plan possible to facilitate your employee's recovery process.

