



RETURN^{TO} WORK

for Better Business



Workplace injuries and illnesses are costly to both workers and employers. Preventing workplace injuries and illnesses should always be the first priority. A return to work program is an effective way to reduce both the human and financial costs when they happen.



Return to Work Programs Reduce Human and Financial Costs

Employers recognize the value of making changes to accommodate a safe and suitable return to work for injured workers. They promote a workplace culture that supports a timely and safe return to health and work by offering modified or alternate duties to meet the temporary or permanent needs of an injured worker.

A return to work program is a proactive approach to helping injured workers return to safe and suitable modified or alternate work as soon as health permits following a workplace injury. Returning to work following a workplace injury requires a step-by-step process for the worker that starts right after they are injured 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 a worker is fit to do so – has many benefits to both employers and workers.

Benefits

For Employers

- Retain valuable workers and make them feel supported in the event of an injury
- Keep experienced workers connected to the workplace
- Reduce the cost of training replacements
- Minimize your WCB costs
- Maintain productivity

For Workers

- Faster and better recovery
- Stay connected to the workplace and co-workers
- Maintain health benefits and financial stability

How Should the Employer Participate?

- The employer should manage the return to work process and involve the injured worker and their healthcare provider; a union and/or worker representative may be included in the team, along with the WCB adjudicator or case manager assigned to the claim, when requested.
- The return to work team develops a plan to help the injured worker return to work safely, within established timelines.
- The return to work plan should be customized to the injured worker, take into consideration the worker's abilities, and reflect the recommendations of the healthcare provider, which may include modified or alternate duties.
- The employer should keep in touch with the injured worker and support them with the return to work plan.
- The WCB should be notified if there is a dispute between the worker and employer on whether the return to work plan is appropriate.

Re-Employment Obligations

The Workers Compensation Act 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 wcb.mb.ca under Resources, or call 204-954-4321 or toll free 1-855-954-4321 for a copy of the pamphlet "Re-employment Obligations."

Where the re-employment obligation applies, *The Workers Compensation Act* specifically requires employers to accommodate the injured worker's work and workplace to the needs of the injured worker, to the extent that the accommodation does not cause the employer undue hardship. Those employers not subject to the re-employment obligation may still have duties to accommodate workers where otherwise required by law, including but not limited to the requirements of *The Human Rights Code*.

How Should the Injured Worker Participate?

- The injured worker should take an active part in the return to work plan.
- The injured worker should attend all healthcare appointments, follow the prescribed treatment plan and help the healthcare provider understand the type of work they do including if there are modified or alternate duties available.
- The injured worker should keep in touch with the employer and the WCB adjudicator/case manager to let them know how their recovery is progressing. If their return to work is not going according to plan, they should call the WCB.

How Should the Healthcare Provider Participate?

- The healthcare provider should recommend timelines for the injured worker's return to work and indicate the worker's abilities and restrictions.
- Timelines should indicate the earliest date for a safe and suitable return to modified or alternate duties.
- The healthcare provider can share information about the injured worker's abilities to the employer with the injured worker's permission.

The WCB's Role

- The WCB adjudicator or case manager will monitor the return to work plan and assist with benefits for the injured worker.
- The WCB adjudicator or case manager will become involved to assist in the return to work plan if requested – we're here to help.
- The WCB adjudicator or case manager will become involved if there is a dispute raised from either the worker or employer on whether the return to work plan is appropriate.

Setting Up a Return to Work Program

For help setting up a return to work program, visit our website for resources. The WCB also offers a free Return to Work Basics workshop that helps employers create custom return to work programs to suit their business needs. To learn more and register, visit wcb.mb.ca/training. Also, consider the following tips for creating a successful return to work program:

- Present the return to work process as part of your company's benefits package and explain that you support helping workers with a timely and safe return to health and work.
- Identify some return to work modified or alternate duties before they are needed.
- Consider job modifications before injured workers return to their former jobs.
- Allow recovering workers to ease into the full work routine, sometimes with graduated hours or work responsibilities if necessary.
- Keep in touch with recovering workers and maintain a positive attitude toward their return to work.
- Focus on what the workers can do, not what they can't do.
- Have workers help to identify possible modified and alternate duties.
- Ask for help from your WCB adjudicator or case manager if you need assistance.

*The WCB offers free
return to work resources
to employers including a
full-day Return to Work
Basics workshop.*

*To learn more,
visit **wcb.mb.ca** and
wcb.mb.ca/training.*



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

Contact Us:

wcb@wcb.mb.ca

204-954-4321

1-855-954-4321 (toll free)

Report fraud and non-compliance:

204-888-8081 or 1-844-888-8081 (toll free)

Compliance@wcb.mb.ca

For more information, visit

www.wcb.mb.ca

The Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba
333 Broadway, Winnipeg, MB R3C 4W3



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204-957-SAFE (7233) in Winnipeg
1-855-957-SAFE (7233) outside Winnipeg