



Returning to Work Makes Sense for Employers



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Staying active, productive, and connected to the workplace can help injured workers recover faster. Many times, the most successful return to work plans involve the worker remaining at work or losing as little time away from work as possible.

Helping an injured worker return to work is also good for business. It can lower your claims costs and lead to lower Workers Compensation Board (WCB) rates.

How can the WCB help?

If your worker cannot perform regular job duties because of an injury, we will work with you, the worker, and healthcare providers to develop a return to work plan. The plan outlines how the worker can return to meaningful work. Some options include a gradual increase to hours or duties, identifying other suitable work, or work conditioning to build strength and stamina.

The plan is unique to each worker. As a team, we design it specifically around the worker's abilities and the kind of work that is available.

Do I have to create a new job to support the return to work?

No. You do not have to create work where there is no work. However, a job vacancy does not have to exist for work to be available. If you have multiple job sites, you can offer suitable work at one of those sites.

What are the benefits of returning to work?

If you are an employer, helping a worker return to work as quickly as possible after an injury has many benefits. It can help to maintain your business's productivity, retain important knowledge and experience and reduce the cost of training replacement workers. A successful return to work program shows all employees that the business values them. It can also reduce your claim costs.

For workers, returning to work can provide a chance to gain new skills and experiences through different work opportunities. It also contributes to the healing process and reduces lost earnings.

Can the worker return to work before being fully recovered?

Yes. Most workers will be able to safely return to some type of work at some point during the recovery process. Depending on their injury, the worker may be able to do some regular job duties or other suitable work. Many workers can return to all of their regular job duties before they fully recover from their injury.

What is suitable work?

Suitable work is work that the worker can do with their current functional ability and skills. It must not be a health and safety risk for the worker or coworkers. It should match the worker's pre-injury earnings, if possible. In general, suitable work should be appropriate, meaningful, reasonable, and productive. We will work with you and your worker to find suitable work.

Will the return to work plan include details about suitable work?

If suitable work is available, the return to work plan should include the following details about the work:

- How the work compares to the pre-injury work
- How the earnings compare to the worker's pre-injury earnings
- How the work accommodates the worker's functional abilities
- The salary of the work
- The date when the worker can start

Does the worker have to accept suitable work if I offer it?

Unless the worker has a legitimate reason to refuse the work, the worker should accept it.

Your role

- Stay in contact with the worker during the worker's recovery period.
- Help create a return to work plan.
- Discuss suitable work. Determine if the work is compatible with the worker's capabilities, and, where possible, if it pays the same.
- Provide us with any information about the worker's return to work.

The worker's role

- Talk to their healthcare providers about what they do at work and what they can do while they recover.
- Attend all scheduled appointments and follow the set treatment plan.

- Keep you informed about their recovery.
- Keep us informed about their progress.

The healthcare providers' role

- Give the worker advice about their functional abilities.
- Provide a report to the WCB.
- Let the worker know when they can safely return to some type of work.

The WCB's role

- Coordinate the return to work plan with the worker.
- Monitor the worker's recovery.
- Explore return to work options with you, the worker, and the healthcare providers.
- Make sure everyone works together to follow the plan.

Supporting a return to work

Depending on the worker's abilities and recovery, we will help determine which return to work option is best for the worker.

Ease back: With an ease back plan, the worker can return to work gradually. As the worker recovers, the work hours and duties may change to match their abilities. You or the WCB can start an ease back plan. The goal is to enable the worker to return to full job duties gradually. A typical ease back lasts 4-6 weeks.

Modified duties: With modified duties, the worker can continue to work regular hours with some temporary changes to job duties.

Alternative duties: With alternative duties, the worker can perform job duties that are different from their pre-injury duties. The hours of work may change depending on the worker's skills, the availability of appropriate duties, the worker's ability to perform them.

For more information

For more information, contact us:

- **Online:** www.wcb.pe.ca
- **In person:** 14 Weymouth Street, Charlottetown
- **By mail:** PO Box 757, Charlottetown, PE, C1A 7L7
- **By phone:** 902-368-5680 or toll-free in Atlantic Canada at 1-800-237-5049
- **By fax:** 902-368-5696



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Workers Compensation Board
14 Weymouth Street,
PO Box 757, Charlottetown, PE C1A 7L7
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Fax: 902-368-5696
Website: www.wcb.pe.ca