## RETURN TO WORK PLANNING

**Purpose**

[Organization Name] will make every reasonable effort to help an injured worker to stay at work or to return to work (RTW) following a work-related injury or illness. The return-to-work program will ensure that as a company we are committed and able to supply modified duties to all workers, where possible, without undue hardship.

The purpose of this policy and program is:

* To provide for the early rehabilitation and return to work of injured workers.
* To provide gainful employment for workers who are permanently disabled due to an injury in the workplace.
* To ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to restore at least the worker’s ability to perform the essential duties of their pre-injury job.

[Organization Name] will identify modified work opportunities before an injury happens, to be better prepared to help an injured worker get back to work safely

**Scope**

This policy applies to all management, workers and contractors.

**Definition**

**Modified work:** is a way of adjusting a worker's job so they can return to work while recovering.  Modified work can include:

* Changes in job tasks or functions (e.g., less lifting or bending).
* Changes in workload (e.g., hours worked per day or the work schedule).
* Alterations to the work area and or the equipment used.
* Work normally performed by others (e.g., administrative work).
* Cross training or job shadowing.
* Work that needs to be done but you currently do not have an employee assigned to complete the work.

**Responsibilities**

**Management**

* Promote and implement a RTW program and ensure the policy is updated as required.
* Identify modified work opportunities before an injury happens.
* Educate workers on the RTW program.
* Ensure everyone in the organization understands the organization’s return-to-work philosophy.
* Ensure employees are aware of the benefits of return-to-work programs.
* Create a return-to-work package
* Discuss the plan with the worker’s Management and ensure that the objective of the RTW program is understood.
* Determine the frequency of conducting evaluations of the RTW program and the worker’s progress in the plan.
* Ensure the worker signs all formal RTW plan(s).
* Send all forms to WorkSafeBC and communicate any progress or challenges to the adjudicator or case manager.
* Update WorkSafeBC when the worker has returned to full duties.
* Report the workers’ injury or illness.
* Give a return-to-work package to the worker.
* Get in touch with the injured worker as soon as possible after the injury or illness.
* Work with management to design the RTW plan.
* Maintain regular contact with the worker during their absence from work.
* Try to provide suitable work. Suitable work is work that:
* is safe,
* is productive,
* is achievable
* is constructive
* Coordinate with the department staff to discuss required accommodation/assistance.
* Meet with the returning worker at the start and end of the first shift to review and discuss any concerns the worker may have.
* Attend regularly scheduled meetings with the worker during the work plan to discuss progress.
* Provide management with any information requested about the worker’s return to work.
* Inform management about any disputes or disagreements with the worker about their return to work.
* Co-operate in the return-to-work process.
* Conduct an evaluation of the modified work program on a yearly basis, to determine its effectiveness.

**Worker**

* Report injury or illness to management as soon as possible.
* Get medical treatment immediately after a work-related injury or illness and follow the recommendations of the health-care professional.
* Understand and use the return-to-work package.
* Report the injury to WorkSafeBC.
* Get in touch with management after the first health-care treatment to begin talking about returning to work.
* Stay in contact with management throughout the recovery and provide him with information on the progress. Try to touch base regularly and keep a record of when you contact management.
* Work with management to identify suitable work opportunities.

**Co-workers:**

* Provide support and encouragement to the worker participating in the RTW program.
* Provide direct assistance for specifically designated tasks on a temporary basis.

**Principles of Modified Work**

[Organization Name] recognizes that the temporarily disabled worker can and should be performing meaningful and productive work. The Return-to-Work program gives structure and organization to this principle and recognizes the employer's and worker's joint responsibility to participate in the rehabilitation of the injured or ill worker. In keeping with these principles [Organization Name] will make every effort to ensure the work offered:

* Is productive and the results must have value.
* Will not aggravate or limit the rehabilitation of the injury or illness.
* Will not constitute an additional hazard to the worker or co-workers while performing the assigned duties.
* Must assist the worker in returning to their original position if possible.
* Confidentiality will be a priority with every RTW Plan.

**Return to Work Package**

Management will provide this return-to-work package to assist and help the worker back to work when it is safe to do so.

* [Notice to injured employee](https://www.wcb.ab.ca/assets/pdfs/employers/Notice_to_Injured_Employee_W.pdf) – to outline [Organization Name] commitment for a return-to-work and as an action plan for the injured worker.

Management will Send a copy of the form to the adjudicator or case manager to provide details about the physical requirements of the pre-accident job duties.

* When receiving the completed fitness for work form, Management will complete a written [Offer of modified work](https://www.wcb.ab.ca/assets/pdfs/employers/Modified_Work_Agreement_W.pdf) agreement for the worker to sign. This agreement provides details on the type of modified work, duration, hours of work and rate of pay to ensure you and your worker have the same understanding of duties.
* Management will send all forms to us and communicate any progress or challenges to the adjudicator or case manager and update WorkSafeBC when the worker has returned to full duties.

**Monitoring an RTW Plan:**

Once the worker commences work under the conditions of the RTW Plan, management will monitor the progress of the plan as follow:

* Contact the worker at least weekly for the first month to ensure the plan is working as anticipated by both parties.
* Ensure the worker is attending all required medical appointments and meetings with [Organization Name].
* Contact the worker’s management for progress reports.
* Modify the ESRTW Agreement as per updated doctor information or other reports provided by recognized medical care givers.
* Report immediately to WorkSafeBC:
* Changes in duties and duration of the plan.
* Failure of the worker to cooperate.
* Completion of the program.
* The RTW plan will be closely monitored to ensure that the worker’s physical restrictions are being fully respected.

**Communication**

This program will be communicated to all workplace parties through safety meetings, orientation or by any other method determined by management.