## EARLY & SAFE RETURN TO WORK

[Organization Name] will make every reasonable eﬀort to help an injured Employee stay at work or return to work (RTW). This Early and Safe Return to Work (ESRTW) program will help ensure that as a Company we are committed and able to supply modiﬁed/accommodated duties to all Employees, where possible, and without undue hardship.

SCOPE

[Organization Name] has implemented a modiﬁed duty program. The program will assist in promoting a timely return to work of Employees.

This procedure applies to all Employees with an occupational injury, illness or disability which results in absence from work, loss of wages, or requires accommodation.

DEFINITIONS

Modified Duty - The modiﬁcation of an Employee’s position (Work Hardening or Transitional Work) that allows for the Employee to carry out the work assigned with-in the Employees’ capabilities. This might include, but is not limited to, changing of work tasks (transitional work, hours of work (sometimes referred to as work hardening)).

STANDARDS/PROCEDURES

Disclosure of Information

In order to facilitate an eﬀective and appropriate Return to Work Case Plan for an injured Worker the Supervisor and/or Management will be allowed access to:

* Restrictions/Limitations, and,
* Functional abilities (cognitive, environmental and physical).

Principles of Modified Duty

[Organization Name] recognizes that a temporarily disabled Employee can and should be performing meaningful and productive work. The Early and Safe Return to Work Procedure (ESRTW) gives structure and organization to this principle and recognizes the Employers' and Employee’s joint responsibility to participate in the rehabilitation of the Employee.

Specifically:

* The work must be productive and the result must have value;
* The work provided must not aggravate the Employee’s condition;
* The Employee’s condition must not constitute an additional hazard to the Employee or fellow Employee(s) while performing the duties assigned;
* The duration of the modiﬁed duty will be determined at the commencement of the program, wherever possible;
* Prior to starting the modiﬁed duty the Employee and Employer will review and sign an Oﬀer of Modiﬁed Duties with respect to the hours of work, the reporting requirements and the nature and duration of the modiﬁed duty position;
* The Functional Abilities of the Employee will be reviewed for the modiﬁed duty; and,
* The Employee is required to supply medical progress reports every two weeks or as often as determined by Management.

General Procedure

* All Employees are required to report any occupational injury/illness to their Supervisor immediately, or as soon as reasonable – as per the Injury, Illness and Incident Reporting Procedure; and,
* Upon learning of a work-related injury/illness the Employee’s Supervisor will follow the Injury, Illness and Incident Reporting procedure.

Communication Protocol

* Communication with the Injured Worker will be documented on the Contact Log by Management;
* Communication is to be conducted on a regular basis, while the Employee is oﬀ work (at least once a week or as frequent as may be required). This will be determined on a case by case basis; and,
* When an Employee is on modiﬁed duties, communication should be daily.

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Management

* Develop in consultation with the Supervisor, the Modiﬁed Duties Oﬀer Letter and the
* Return to Work Case Plan;
* To provide a fair and consistent rehabilitation policy for injured Employees disabled due to illness or injury;
* To provide meaningful Employment for temporarily disabled Employees and promote the ESRTW Procedure;
* To ensure that there is no conﬂict with the collective agreements (where applicable);
* Determine and maintain medical monitoring and treatment with the use of the Functional Abilities Form. The frequency of medical contacts can be determined on a case by case basis;
* To facilitate communication between the department, the Employee, and the treating agency of the Employee;
* To assist in the modiﬁcation of the workplace;
* To explain the objectives and requirements of the ESRTW program;
* To oversee the progress of the Employees modiﬁed duties; and,
* To liaise with the employee’s treating agency and other agencies, when required.

Supervisor

* To advise the Employee of the availability of work hardening or transitional work;
* To assist in the creation the Modiﬁed Duties Oﬀer Letter and Return to Work Case Plan;
* Provide the Employee with the Employee’s Kit for Reporting Work Related Injuries as well as Modiﬁed Work Oﬀer Letter and Return to Work Case Plan;
* To maintain communication with the Employee on modiﬁed duties and monitor their progress and the eﬀectiveness, on an individual case by case basis;
* Submit weekly progress reports to Management;
* To ensure the Injured Worker obtains and submits page 3 of Form 8 (this page provides functional abilities and return to work information) following the initial visit with the Health Care Professional;
* To ensure the worker obtains and submits a Functional Abilities Form from the Health Care Professional, if required after a subsequent visit;
* To ensure the Employee signs the Acknowledgement Form in receipt of the Employee’s Kit for Reporting Work Related Injuries, and their understanding of their responsibilities;
* Document and forward any communication and/or concerns with the return to work plan Management; and,
* Monitor the Workers compliance with the return to work plan including any restrictions of abilities which may apply.

Worker

* To maintain regular contact with the Supervisor (see communication protocol above);
* To take an active role in developing their Return to Work Case Plan;
* To communicate any concerns to their Supervisor and Management;
* To obtain the necessary forms from the treating agencies as may be required by the Employer;
* Submit all Functional Abilities Forms or other supporting health care documentation to Management with 24 hours of treatment;
* To ensure that other scheduled rehabilitation activities such as physical therapy or doctor's appointments are continued while on modiﬁed duty. These appointments are to be arranged whenever possible during non-work hours;
* To co-operate with all requests for documentation as required by the WSIB and the Employer;
* To attend all scheduled ESRTW meetings;
* Must work within their functional abilities and/or restrictions as per the return to work plan;
* To obtain and submit page 3 of Form 8 (this page provides functional abilities and return to work information) from their Health Care Professional and return to Supervisor; and,
* To obtain and submit a Functional Abilities Form from the Health Care Professional, if required from Supervisor after a subsequent visit.
* Health Professionals:
* To provide up to date medical information;
* Fill in the forms as requested; and,
* Act as a resource.

Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB)

* Process all reports/claims of occupational injury, illness, or disability; and,
* Act as a resource to the Employer and the Employee.

COMMUNICATION

This procedure will be communicated to all Employees during orientation. Any revisions or modiﬁcations of this procedure will be communicated to all Employees.

TRAINING

Upon initial hire or appointment, and refreshed annually. Supervisors will receive speciﬁc training on their roles and responsibilities under this procedure.

EVALUATION/REVIEW

Management will review the effectiveness of the policy statement, procedure and program annually in cooperation with the Worker Health and Safety Representative(s)/Joint Health and Safety Committee.

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