



An Introduction to Workplace Rehabilitation



Outline

- Definition of “workplace rehabilitation”
 - Goals of workplace rehabilitation
 - Obligations
- Who may be involved in rehabilitation
- Your employer’s process for injured workers
 - Paperwork
 - Who to contact

Workplace Rehabilitation

- Workplace Rehabilitation is a rehabilitation system initiated or managed by the employer to assist injured (or ill) workers in returning to work.
- This includes injuries that only require medical/therapy treatment but no time off work.
- As the name indicates, workplace rehabilitation uses the workplace as a tool for rehabilitation—i.e., work activities are used to assist the worker in recovering from injury or illness.
- Workplace rehabilitation helps injured workers maintain their daily routine and allows for gradual increases in their level of involvement in particular activities as they recover from injury or illness.



Goals of Workplace Rehabilitation

- To return the injured worker to their pre-injury position and to maximise their independent functioning.
- To create an environment in which the rehabilitation of injured workers is accepted and supported.



The Legislation - QLD

The legislation governing workplace rehabilitation in Queensland is the *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003* and *Regulation 2014*.

The legislation provides that the following people have obligations in relation to rehabilitation:

- Injured workers
- Employers
- Supervisors/managers.



Obligations – Injured Workers

Injured workers' obligations include:

- To attend a medical practitioner for diagnosis and certification.
- To complete and lodge the application for compensation as soon as possible after the injury occurs.
- To participate in rehabilitation as soon as practicable after the injury is sustained and for the period for which compensation is being paid.



Obligations – Employers

Employers' obligations include:

- To complete and lodge the Employer's Report within 8 days of becoming aware of a worker's injury.
- To pay the worker for the day of injury plus an applicable excess payment for a period of total or partial incapacity.
- To take all reasonable steps to assist or provide the worker with rehabilitation for the period for which the worker is entitled to compensation.



Obligations – Managers

- Rehabilitation should be coordinated with and understood by line managers and supervisors.
- As an employer representative, the manager should also remember the employer's obligation to take all reasonable steps to assist or provide the worker with rehabilitation, particularly when considering the availability of suitable duties and providing a supportive work environment.



People involved in Rehabilitation

–The Treating Doctor

- The treating doctor is the doctor whom the injured worker sees most often in relation to their injury.
- The treating doctor provides medical certificates, monitors the injured worker's progress, signs suitable duties plans (if required) and may speak to the workplace rehabilitation coordinator to discuss the worker's progress.



Rehabilitation & RTW Coordinator

- The rehabilitation coordinator position is required under Queensland legislation. (See Regulation 115 for more information)
- The rehabilitation coordinator has attended training to teach them how to perform their role.
- The rehabilitation coordinator is an injured worker's first point of contact for any questions regarding workplace rehabilitation.
- The rehabilitation coordinator is better able to assist the injured worker if they are allowed to speak to the workers' treatment providers, e.g., the treating doctor or physiotherapist.



The Employer or Supervisor

- The employer or supervisor will usually assist in identifying duties that may be appropriate for a worker returning after injury.
- The employer or supervisor will monitor the injured workers' progress in relation to work tasks.
- The supervisor may talk with the injured worker's co-workers (in general terms – not revealing medical information) to ensure they do not expect the injured worker to perform tasks that are restricted by their suitable duties plan.



Insurer's Customer Advisor

- The insurer's Customer Advisor (WorkCover Queensland Customer Advisor or Customer Advisor from the employer's self-insurance unit) is responsible for the management of the compensation claim.
- The injured worker can contact the Customer Advisor with any questions regarding the insurer's (WorkCover's or self-insurance unit's) processes or with concerns regarding medical/therapy treatment or workplace rehabilitation.
- This person is assigned to the injured worker once their claim for compensation is accepted.
- There may be a slight delay between the time of injury and the case being assigned to the Customer Advisor.
- This is why it is important to work with the rehabilitation coordinator who will assist the injured worker before the Customer Advisor is assigned, and who may also assist by forwarding ongoing paperwork (receipts, certificates etc) through to the Customer Advisor.



External Providers

- External providers are the health professionals (other than doctors) who assist in the injured worker's recovery and return to work.
- Some will provide treatment in their rooms, others will assist more specifically with workplace rehabilitation.
- The three groups who are most likely to provide worksite-based services are occupational therapists, physiotherapists and psychologists.
- These providers may come to the injured worker's workplace (or in the case of serious injuries, to the injured worker's home) to assess their level of function after a work injury and to assist the worker and the rehabilitation coordinator to develop suitable duties plans.



The Rehabilitation Process

- Each organisation has a specific process that their workers follow during their rehabilitation.
- The rehabilitation coordinator will now talk through a flow chart depicting your employers' rehabilitation process for injured workers.



Paperwork

- **Claim Form:** this is the form that is sent to the insurer (WorkCover or employer's self-insurance unit) to apply for compensation.
- **Authority:** this is the form that the worker can sign to allow the rehabilitation coordinator to talk with their treating doctor or other health professionals to assist the return to work process.
- **Suitable Duties Plans:** these plans assist injured workers to remain in the workplace and to return to their usual duties.
- Suitable duties plans take into consideration:
 - The nature of the worker's incapacity and pre-injury employment
 - Relevant medical information
 - The employer's workplace rehabilitation policy and procedures
 - The worker's age, education, skills and experience.
- A suitable duties plan usually contains details of the duties the worker will perform for a particular week and specific tasks they are restricted from performing.



Contact Details

Please inform your rehabilitation coordinator as soon as possible after a workplace injury or injury on the way to or from work.

Your Rehabilitation & RTW Co-ordinator is :

Contact number:

Insurer:



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1300 647 200



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