Rehabilitation and Compensation

– Rehabilitation

Employers managing rehabilitation >

This information bulletin is about rehabilitation and returning to work. It aims to show employers how they can help get their workers back to work – and to be productive.

Lost time injuries

Lost time injuries are not good for business, especially for small business. Any lost time accident can substantially reduce productivity.

Make sure wages paid to the worker are recovered from the insurer, so the employer or the business is not financially worse off if a temporary replacement is needed. The best option is to try to get an early return to work for injured workers.

Assisting return to work

Return to work may be assisted by:

- referring or discussing the injury with the insurer. Ensuring, if necessary, that there is a referral of an injured worker to an accredited vocational rehabilitation provider who can help to devise and implement a suitable early return to work plan;
- requesting productivity based reimbursement from the insurer after the worker commences a return to work program (ie. if the worker is only able to complete half the job for a period, then it would be reasonable for the insurer to pay half the worker's wages during that time).

There are going to be times when workers are unable to return to their former jobs. The following may prompt ways in which to deal with this problem:

- Determine if there is another job or a combination of jobs the worker might be able to do.
- Have an accredited vocational rehabilitation provider check out the suitability of the duties, and make recommendations regarding ergonomics and workstations etc.
- If a return to work is possible then get the rehabilitation provider to help the employer and the worker, to develop, implement and monitor the return to work plan.

This may also involve consultation with the treating doctor, fellow workers or union representatives:

- When return to previous work for a worker is not possible, then the employer is required under the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act* to assist the worker in finding another job or even provide retraining where possible. (This does not mean actually finding the job, but assist by networking with other businesses and by providing leads, contacts, support, references etc).

- Retraining of the worker may be necessary and can be done at formal institutions, on the job, or with another employer. Talk to the insurer about retraining as part of rehabilitation for the worker.
- Ensure that costs involved in re-deploying or retraining workers will be met by the insurer.

Some other points to remember are:

- the longer the worker is out of the workforce, the more difficult it is for them to return to employment;
- the longer it takes a worker to get a job, the more a claim will cost the insurer, who will have to pass the cost on through premiums to the employer; and
- increased premiums push the price of products and services up reducing the ability of some businesses to compete with other companies.

Rehabilitation is cost effective and is good business practice!

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