**RETURN TO WORK (RTW) POLICY & PROCEDURES**

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| **Title: Return to Work (RTW)** | **Date of Issue:** |
| **Approved by:** | **Review/Revise Date:** |
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| **Policy Statement** | |
| * A brief statement confirming the company’s commitment to the program and explaining the company’s return to work (RTW) philosophy.   **Example**  [Company name] is committed to providing a healthy and safe workplace for our workers. Preventing work- related injuries and illnesses is our primary goal.  Our RTW Program provides opportunities for a worker who is injured on the job to return to work at full duty. If the worker is not physically capable of returning to full duty, the program provides opportunities to perform the regular job with modifications or, when available, to perform alternate temporary work that meets the worker's physical capabilities.  [Company Name] and its workers are committed to co-operating and participating in their RTW Program. | |
| **Scope** | |
| * What does the program include? Who is eligible to participate in the RTW Program?   **Example**  The RTW Program applies to all workers of the company, both unionized and non-unionized, and management. The program covers both work and non-work-related injuries and illnesses. | |
| **Objectives** | |
| * What does the company hope to achieve through the RTW Program?   **Example**   * + To reduce the number of days lost to injury or illness   + To lessen the financial and emotional impact of the injury or illness on the worker by intervening for an early and safe RTW   + To reduce the costs related to work and non-work-related injury or illness   + To educate workers on disability management   + To comply with all legislation, including the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act* and *Human Rights Code*   + To reduce the number of future injuries and illnesses through a healthy and safe workplace. | |
| **Roles and Responsibilities** | |
| * Who is involved in the RTW process and what are they responsible for in the process?   This will vary by company but should include the:   * + Employer   + Worker   + Worker’s supervisor   + Worker’s treating health professional   + Person responsible for coordinating the RTW process (this could be a Return to Work   Co-ordinator)   * + Union.   Example  **Employer Responsibilities**   * Provide a safe work environment. * Promptly report work-related injuries/illnesses to the WSIB when they occur. * Develop written return to work policies and procedures that are fair and consistently applied to all workers covered by the program. * Educate all workers about the RTW program. * Train all supervisors in effective return to work strategies. * Train workers on proper reporting of incidents and incident investigation. * Communicate regularly with workers during their time away from work, and monitor their progress when they return. * Work with the worker and treating health professional to identify suitable work. * Modify the workplace as required to accommodate workers who are disabled due to illness or injury. * Monitor the progress of workers in modified work programs and meet with them regularly to ensure they will be successful in achieving their return to work goal.   **Worker Responsibilities**   * Know and follow safety policies and procedures. * Report any injury/illness immediately. * If medical attention is necessary, inform the treating health professional that return to work opportunities are available in the workplace to accommodate their physical abilities. Keep the treating health professional informed about return to work options and injury/illness symptoms. * Communicate with the employer through the recovery period, and cooperate with the employer in finding suitable employment for return to work. * Inform the Return to Work Coordinator or other workplace representative(s) about any concerns with treatment, benefits, work duties, changes in circumstances, etc. * Comply with the recommendations of treating health professionals; attend all medical or rehabilitation appointments regularly; attend independent assessments as requested. * Take an active role in developing their return to work plan. * Obtain the necessary documentation from the treating health professional as may be required by the employer (for example, functional abilities information) * Report any concerns with the return to work to the supervisor or to the WSIB case manager, so the problems can be addressed promptly. * Attend scheduled return to work progress meetings with the employer/supervisor.   **Supervisor/Manager Responsibilities**   * Take appropriate action when an injury or illness is reported. * Participate in return to work planning. * Identify appropriate work duties, transitional work options and temporary or permanent job accommodations for employees with disabilities. * Know who to refer a worker with a disability to if the worker is having difficulties before, during or after they return to work. For example, the workplace Return to Work Coordinator. * Monitor safe work practices of workers who are returning to work. * Answer co-workers’ questions and concerns about workers with disabilities, job modifications, job restructuring, etc., being careful to maintain the confidentiality of the worker’s situation. * Notify the Return to Work Coordinator about potential candidates for the disability management or return to work program. * Promote safe work practices and support the efforts of the company’s health and safety program.   **WSIB Responsibilities**   * Provide education to workers and employers * Actively case manage and monitor activities, progress and co-operation of the workplace parties * Maintain communication with the employer, the worker and their treating health professional throughout the RTW process * Determine the suitability of employment and fitness to return to work * Encourage and actively assist the worker in their successful RTW * Determine compliance with re-employment and co-operation obligations * Provide RTW resources that the workplace parties may choose to access * Provide Labour Market Re-entry services * In cases where the workplace parties are having trouble achieving a successful RTW outcome,   + Assist workplaces to problem solve workplace issues that present an obstacle to successful RTW   + Facilitate communication between workplace parties, health professionals, unions and other interested parties   + Obtain commitment from the worker and employer on the RTW plan and process   + Attempt to resolve disputes that are preventing a successful RTW outcome.   **Treating Health Professional Responsibilities**   * Provide appropriate, effective health care that facilitates recovery and expedites return to productive work. * Provide information on the worker’s functional abilities when requested by the company, the worker or the WSIB. * Complete functional assessment forms thoroughly, being alert to job demands that might cause re-injury or aggravation of an existing condition. * Suggest ways in which tasks could be modified to place less strain on existing injuries or conditions. * Establish and maintain open communication with the workplace, having regard for patient confidentiality. * Provide timely information to the WSIB. | |
| **Procedures and Process** | |
| * What are the steps in the RTW process?   Example   1. A worker who is injured at work must immediately report the incident to their supervisor 2. The supervisor is required to:    * Obtain immediate medical attention for the worker who is injured or ill    * Arrange for transportation to get medical care, if needed    * Follow company requirements for reporting work-related injuries and illnesses    * Complete an incident investigation report    * Maintain contact with the worker through the recovery period. 3. The employer and worker will work together to plan RTW 4. The worker is responsible for following medical restrictions on the job 5. Following the worker’s return to work, the supervisor or the RTW coordinator monitors the worker’s progress, to help resolve any difficulties and ensure that restrictions are carefully followed 6. The worker must immediately report any difficulties performing assigned work, at which point, the supervisor and worker will work to address the problem. | |
| **Communication/Training/Implementation** | |
| * How will the program be communicated to everyone who is involved in the RTW process? * How will everyone in the company be educated and informed about how the program works? * Who needs to know about the program externally, and how will we communicate our program to them? External parties include health professionals, the WSIB and other insurance companies the company may deal with.   Example  The success of our RTW program depends on everyone involved in the process being informed of the program.  The initial communication to all workers is through an information package created and distributed to all workers and management covered by the program. All new workers will receive the information package within two business days of starting with the company. This will be followed by training so they understand how the program works. Additional sessions will be regularly scheduled.  The information package will be reviewed each year and any changes will be communicated by the supervisor to workers immediately, or as soon as possible, after the changes are made.  In addition to communication to all workers and management, all managers will receive training when the program is first implemented, and will receive follow-up training each year after that.  We will communicate with all treating health professionals by sending them a letter advising them  that we have a RTW program. We will also communicate with them as needed to let them know about changes and to clarify any issues.  We will ensure that the WSIB and any other insurer we use will be kept up-to-date on the progress of any workers in the process. | |
| **Evaluation** | |
| * How often will the program be evaluated to ensure that it is working and meeting the objectives? * What will be included in the evaluation? What specifically will be evaluated? * Who is responsible for the evaluation?   Example  An evaluation of our RTW program will be completed at the end of each year. The RTW coordinator for our company will complete the evaluation and present it to senior management. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine if we are meeting the objectives of the program.  Also, each worker and supervisor who has been through the RTW process will independently complete an evaluation at the end of the return to work.  We are committed to using the results of our evaluation to improve our program. | |
| **Forms** | |
| * What forms will be used in the RTW process? Your procedures should include a copy of any letters or forms used in the program.   Example:  Sample Letter to Health Professional  Sample Offer of Suitable Employment  Sample RTW Plans  Functional Abilities Form  Physical Demands Information Form | |
| **Reference Materials** | |
| |  | | --- | | What materials were referenced when developing the policy and procedures for the company’s RTW program?  **Example** |  *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act* – RTW sections  * RTW Self-assessment Guide | |