All you need to know about rehabilitation and return to work coordinators
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If you are an employer who is required by the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986 (the Act) to appoint a rehabilitation and return to work coordinator (in this guide, referred to as a coordinator), this guide is intended to help you with this process.

It also aims to help both you and your coordinator to understand your legal obligations and effectively manage the return to work of your injured workers.

It will help you to:

• develop workplace rehabilitation policy and procedures
• understand the functions of the coordinator
• understand who is involved in the return to work process and what their roles and responsibilities are
• set up effective communication channels with everyone involved in the return to work process
• minimise the cost and productivity losses of work-related injuries and illness on your workplace.

How to use this guide

If you are an employer, turn to the light blue section which starts on page 5. It is designed to help you prepare for and implement the role of the coordinator in your workplace. However, you will need to read the green section as well, to familiarise yourself with the information that is specifically aimed at coordinators.

If you are a coordinator, turn to the green section which starts on page 13. It is designed to help you prepare for when a worker is injured in your workplace, and to understand what is expected of you in your role as coordinator.

There is an orange section on where to get more information on page 25.

There is a purple section, containing general information and relevant forms for both parties (in the appendices), which starts on page 27.
The facts

Do I need to appoint a coordinator?

If you employ more than 30 workers (regardless of how many hours they work), you must appoint a coordinator within six months of being registered with WorkCover. Your coordinator must be based in South Australia and, unless you are exempt under the regulations, they must be your employee.

This applies to workplaces with 30 or more employees from 1 January 2009, although an existing employer has until 30 June 2009 for their coordinator to be appointed and do the required training.

How will my business benefit from appointing a coordinator?

A coordinator can help you manage injury or illness in your workplace better. If workers are injured, it can cost you money – through lost productivity, outlays for training, temporary employee wages and the cost of additional supervision.

All this is complicated by the uncertainty of not knowing exactly when your injured workers will be back on the job.

The best thing for all concerned is for your injured workers to return to work as soon as it is safe for them to do so. Research shows that staying home until completely recovered is often not the best thing for your injured worker to do – returning to work with the doctor’s consent, even to restricted duties, is an important part of recovery for many people.

By appointing a coordinator you will have an employee working to facilitate the return to work process, and your worker and your business should recover sooner as a result.

Why your injured worker’s early return to work is good for business

• Your business maintains productivity.
• Your business maintains the skills and contribution of experienced or highly trained workers who know your organisation and contribute to your competitive edge.
• You maintain the motivation of your injured worker and keep them focused on recovery.
• You demonstrate a commitment to your workforce and send a message that the recovery and rehabilitation of your injured workers is important to your business.
• You reduce costs associated with replacing your injured worker.
What are the functions of a coordinator?

Your coordinator is assigned the following functions under section 28D of the Act:

- Assisting your injured workers to remain at, or return to work, as soon and as safely as possible after injuries occur
- Assisting with liaising with the claims agent (or a self-insured employer) in the preparation and implementation of rehabilitation and return to work plans for your injured workers
- Liaising with persons involved in rehabilitation or providing medical services to your injured workers
- Monitoring the progress of your injured workers’ capacity to return to work
- Taking steps to prevent the occurrence of secondary injuries

How can my coordinator help me encourage the early recovery and return to work of my injured workers?

There are strategies to help your injured workers recover more quickly and reduce the impact of work-related injuries on your business. Your coordinator can manage these strategies for you. Some of these strategies include:

- making early contact and being supportive and understanding when a workplace injury or illness occurs – this will help to maintain a sound relationship between you and your injured worker
- offering suitable employment to workers who are not fit to perform their normal duties
- accommodating your injured workers by arranging to make modifications to work stations or rearranging shifts
- making sure that your injured workers modify their work practices to include regular changes of posture, stretches and any required rest breaks, in-line with their treating doctor’s instructions
- involving supervisors in return to work planning
- building co-worker and workplace support for your injured workers.

Who should I appoint as my coordinator?

Your coordinator should have a good understanding of your workplace, work practices and job requirements. They will need to have regular access to all areas of the workplace (where appropriate and where your business rules permit) and to employees and supervisors with whom it may be necessary to discuss suitable work for your injured workers.

They will also need to be respected by other employees and supported by management. Without the cooperation of other employees and the backing of management, your coordinator will not be effective in fulfilling responsibilities under the Act.

The coordinator does not have to be a full-time employee who is dedicated solely to the coordinator’s role. However, an employer must ensure that a coordinator who has another role or roles within an organisation has sufficient capacity to carry out the functions listed in the Act (see page 28, Appendix A for an extract from the legislation).

The person appointed must be an employee of the organisation.

If you have two or more workplaces with more than 30 workers you must appoint a contact for each to assist the coordinator.
Can I get an exemption?
Apart from employers who employ less than 30 workers, all employers registered with WorkCover will need to appoint an in-house coordinator, unless they are eligible to obtain an exemption. This occurs if:

(i) the employer employs 30 or more workers for less than three continuous months of the financial year or
(ii) the employer is part of a ‘group’ arrangement (where a group of employers share a coordinator) approved by WorkCover.

Details on how an exemption or group arrangement can be sought are contained in WorkCover’s Rehabilitation and return to work coordinator training and operational guidelines available on WorkCover’s website www.workcover.com.

What happens if I don’t appoint a coordinator or don’t do it by the required time?
WorkCover has the ability to charge a supplementary levy or prosecute employers that fail to meet their legislative obligations. WorkCover’s Return to Work Inspectorate and Support Unit will undertake audits to ensure employers are meeting their obligations. If you are not sure of what you need to do, please contact WorkCover on 13 18 55 or email rttwc-support@workcover.com.

What training is my coordinator required to have?
Your coordinator will need to complete either a one-day (Level 1) or a two or three-day training course (Level 2) approved by WorkCover, depending on the industry in which your business operates. An employer who is considered low risk (excluding self-insured employers) will need to ensure that the coordinator satisfactorily completes Level 1 training. Any other employer who is required to appoint a coordinator (including self-insured employers) must ensure that the coordinator satisfactorily completes Level 2 training. An employer with an industry base levy rate of less than 4.5% is considered low risk.

Some refresher training will need to be undertaken annually if your coordinator wishes to continue in this role. They may also be required to participate in ongoing professional development activities as determined by WorkCover.

What are the limits of my coordinator’s role?
Your coordinator does not have the authority to:

• make any decisions about your injured workers’ compensation claims
• incur expenses on behalf of WorkCover
• develop and approve rehabilitation and return to work plans.

(Note: these rules do not necessarily apply to self-insured employers – a self-insured employer may assign some or all of these authorities to its coordinator).
The training will allow your coordinator to develop a good understanding of the relevant parts of the workers compensation system, in particular the legislative requirements and responsibilities of employers and injured workers.

They will be able to develop an understanding of injury and return to work management and the roles of doctors, allied health professionals, line managers and injured workers.

More information on training including the list of approved training providers can be found on WorkCover’s website, www.workcover.com.

**Note:** You may be able to apply for recognition of prior learning or a credit transfer for some of the training modules. If you choose to do this you will need to discuss it with your chosen training provider.

**What do I need to do if my coordinator resigns?**
If your coordinator leaves your employment you must appoint another coordinator within three months. WorkCover has the ability to prosecute employers that fail to meet this obligation. WorkCover’s Return to Work Inspectorate and Support Unit will undertake audits to ensure employers are meeting their obligations.

**What are my responsibilities when my employees are injured?**
As an employer, you must fulfil certain responsibilities when an employee is injured in your workplace. Your coordinator can help you undertake these responsibilities.

**Ensure medical assessment and treatment takes place**
If one of your workers is injured or ill at work, the first thing you should do is help them to get appropriate medical treatment. It may also be useful to advise them that they may be entitled to make a workers compensation claim.

**Record the details**
You should document the details of the work-related injury or illness and retain the record (in accordance with the requirements of the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986).

**Submitting claims**
When you become aware that one of your workers has suffered a work-related injury or illness you must notify Employers Mutual within five working days, or in-line with your procedures as a self-insured employer. If your worker gives you a completed claim form you must forward it to Employers Mutual or process the form in line with your self-insured procedures.

Effective from 1 January 2009, if you report the claim within two business days and provide wage information as requested by WorkCover you will not be required to pay the first two weeks of weekly payments. You will be rewarded for early claim notification.
Every day counts
The sooner you act when a worker is injured, the better the outcome will be. Waiting a few days to see if an injury will settle down can add significantly to claim costs. A study of more than 50,000 claims by Hartford Insurance found claims reported within two weeks of injury were 18% more expensive than those reported within one week. Claims reported within three weeks were 29% more expensive, and by five weeks, costs were 45% higher. Source: Englemen, Englemen & Patrick, nZx Inc. quoting Hartford Insurance Group, 2001.

Return to work obligations
You are required to provide suitable employment for your injured worker if they are able to return to work in any capacity (whether part-time or full-time). You are also required to pay an appropriate salary or wage for any alternative or modified duties your worker performs.

A penalty may be applied if you refuse or fail to provide suitable employment for your injured worker, unless WorkCover agrees that it is not reasonably practicable for you to do so. However, more importantly, failure to provide suitable employment prolongs the return to work process, increasing the claims costs and your levy (premium).

Offering suitable employment and accommodating your injured worker is an important step you can take towards improving return to work outcomes in your workplace and reducing claims costs.

What else can you do?
The actions you take early on after a worker is injured may affect the return to work outcome. You should consider taking the following actions:

- Contact your injured worker and offer your personal support.
- Let your worker know that safety in the workplace is important to you, and how you are going to address the hazards that led to the injury.
- Tell your injured worker who your coordinator is and that they will be contacted by that person soon.
- Talk to your other employees and ask them for their support in assisting your injured worker with early return to work.
Setting up systems to support your coordinators

Your coordinator needs your support to carry out his or her functions effectively. You should provide physical facilities such as access to a workstation or office, a telephone, email and internet access, fax machine and stationery. You should also have systems in place, so that everyone in the workplace agrees, understands and knows what to do in the event of an injury.

If you are an employer who is required to appoint a coordinator, you must establish procedures for the rehabilitation and return to work of your injured workers in your workplace.

You may also choose to write a policy as a platform for your procedures. Your policy will serve to inform everyone at the workplace about your organisation’s commitment to the support and assistance of your injured workers in their rehabilitation and return to work.

What are procedures for rehabilitation and return to work in the workplace?

Procedures for rehabilitation and return to work in the workplace describe how rehabilitation is implemented in your organisation. They act as a guide to the process and describe the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved, including your coordinator. They should be specific to your organisation and be written in clear and simple language so that they are easily understood by all management and workers.

Preparing your procedures for rehabilitation and return to work in the workplace

Ideally you should develop your procedures in consultation with your employees, as their cooperation is critical to the success of your return to work initiatives. Some things you may find useful to include in your procedures are:

- a statement of your policy, if you have one, for the rehabilitation and return to work of your injured workers
- the name of your coordinator
- the functions of your coordinator
- the rights and responsibilities of an injured worker
- the rights and responsibilities of the employer
- the role of line managers/supervisors/team leaders and co-workers in returning an injured worker to work
- a reference to confidentiality (see page 11)
- all matters agreed by you and your employees in developing the rehabilitation policy and procedures
- provision for sign-off by you or your delegate
- early reporting of an injury or illness
- grievance procedures
- provision of suitable employment
- suitable employment schedules (see page 21 for more on suitable employment).
Your procedures (and policy statement, if you have one) should be displayed in the workplace or made available to employees. Your procedures may be integrated with other similar existing procedures or documents – they do not need to stand alone. You should consider including them in your staff induction procedures as well.

Appendix C is an example of a policy and procedures document, see page 31.

Preparing your policy statement
If you choose to develop a policy for your injured workers’ rehabilitation and return to work, it should:

• be developed in consultation with your workers
• be integral and relevant to the organisation’s mission statement, vision, core beliefs, overall management structure and systems, activities, products, services and people
• recognise the requirements of the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986 and workers compensation legislative compliance
• express a commitment to communicating relevant information to all workers
• acknowledge the organisation’s duty of care to all persons in the workplace
• express a commitment to the protection of personal information
• express commitment to effective rehabilitation and return to work procedures in the workplace.

Confidentiality
Your rehabilitation and return to work procedures and policy statement should contain a reference to confidentiality.

Section 112AA of the Act says that you and your coordinator must not disclose information about the physical or mental condition of your injured workers unless the disclosure is:

’(a) reasonably required for, or in connection with, the carrying out of the proper conduct of the business of the employer; or
(b) required in connection with the operation of this Act; or
(c) made with the consent of the person to whom the information relates, or who furnished the information; or
(d) required by a court or tribunal constituted by law, or before a review authority; or
(e) authorised or required under any other Act or law; or
(f) made—
(i) to the Corporation; or
(ii) to the worker’s employer; or
(g) made under the authorisation of the minister; or
(h) authorised by regulation.’

A penalty of $5,000 may be applied for breaches of this section of the Act.
You should ensure that at the time personal information is collected from your injured worker, they are aware of the purposes for which the personal information has been collected, how it may be used, to who it may be disclosed and who may have access to it. You must also ensure personal information is protected against loss and against unauthorised access, use, modification or disclosure, and against other misuse.

Personal information may be contained in the following documents:

- External service provider documents such as rehabilitation and return to work plans, progress reports etc
- File notes, letters, faxes and suitable employment schedules completed by your coordinator
- Doctors’ assessments and reports
- Vocational rehabilitation service documents

You should ensure that access to an injured worker’s return to work file is restricted to those with a legitimate need to know. Access should be confined to relevant documents on the case file and limited to those:

- who have direct responsibility for coordinating, monitoring or providing return to work services to your injured workers
- involved in providing clerical and administrative support for your injured workers.

You should have in place an appropriate security system that will ensure the confidentiality of all information. You should:

- provide a secure storage system for files, documents or materials containing personal and medical information about your injured workers, so that unauthorised access is not possible
- ensure that personal and medical information stored on a computer system is secured so that only your coordinator and authorised managers can access it
- provide access to a private work space where required for your coordinator’s use in the performance of their functions, ensuring that face-to-face and telephone conversations of a confidential nature cannot be overheard or that documents are not read by persons who are not authorised to access such information.

Did you know?

By having workplace-based rehabilitation procedures and programs, employers can reduce levy payments and overall costs. In fact, it has been estimated that employers who have active systems can save around 70% on a typical compensation claim*.

More importantly, this involvement is not only better for your business, it’s much better for your injured worker. The longer a worker stays off work, the longer it takes them to recover. Any delay can have long-term effects on self-esteem, confidence and the nature of their recovery.

So, encouraging your injured workers to return to the workplace as part of their recovery is good for everyone. By working together, the coordinator, employers, workers and doctors, claims agent and rehabilitation consultants can identify appropriate and safe opportunities for an early return to work that will help injured workers get well sooner.

* K. Foster, Active Occupational Health Services, 2005.
Your roles and responsibilities as a rehabilitation and return to work coordinator

As a coordinator, you have a crucial role to help injured workers achieve the best possible recovery, and a faster return to work. While you have some specific functions listed under section 28D of the Act (see page 6, in the ‘employers’ section) there are some other important reasons you have been chosen.

Your employer believes that you have a good understanding of your workplace, and are someone who has the respect and trust of other employees.

So that you have a good understanding of the workers compensation system, your employer is also committed to your continuing professional development. This means you will be supported in getting the right training and support, particularly around the legislative requirements and responsibilities of employers and injured workers (see page 7-8, in the ‘employers’ section).

Your functions include the following:

1. Helping injured workers to safely remain at or return to work as soon as possible following a work-related illness or injury by:
   - keeping in contact with them, especially while they are not at work
   - liaising with supervisors and line managers regarding suitable employment for injured workers (your employer is required to provide safe, suitable employment that an injured worker is fit to perform, unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so)
   - providing information about available alternative duties to the injured worker’s doctor (alternative duties can be modified duties which are provided for an injured worker who has some ability to work but cannot perform his or her pre-injury duties – this can form part of a graduated program of return to work)
   - documenting details of injured workers’ ability to work, restrictions and suitable employment that have been provided to you on a suitable employment schedule
   - providing supervisors and line managers with a copy of the suitable employment schedule
   - reporting any barriers to return to work to your employer and the case manager

2. Assisting with liaising with the case manager and/the vocational rehabilitation consultant when they are preparing and implementing rehabilitation and return to work plans (see page 14 for more on return to work plans)

3. Communicating with persons involved in rehabilitation or providing medical expert services to workers (see page 19 for more information on medical expert services)

4. Monitoring the progress of an injured worker’s ability to return to work and advising your employer and the case manager of any emerging barriers to return to work

5. Taking steps to prevent the aggravation or worsening of a worker’s injuries when they return to work
What is a rehabilitation and return to work plan?

Rehabilitation and return to work plans must be prepared for injured workers when they are receiving income maintenance, and are incapacitated (or are likely to be incapacitated) for more than 13 weeks, but have some prospect of returning to work. This does not prevent plans from being commenced sooner (than 13 weeks) where claims are high risk or where the need is identified.

A rehabilitation and return to work plan documents the responsibilities of the worker, employer and other parties in the process of rehabilitating and safely returning an injured worker to the workplace, when an injury is compensable. It outlines the actions to be taken, the dates by which they are to be undertaken, and the cost involved, and it is a binding document once it has been approved by the case manager.

The case manager is responsible for ensuring that a rehabilitation and return to work plan is developed, if required. The case manager will often make a referral to a vocational rehabilitation consultant (see page 20 for more on vocational rehabilitation consultants), who will develop a rehabilitation program (which is part of the rehabilitation and return to work plan) in consultation with the worker, employer and doctor. However, the case manager is the only person with the authority to approve a rehabilitation and return to work plan.

There will be times when you may be able to coordinate the injured worker’s return to work yourself, by using your knowledge of the workplace and working closely with the worker and his or her supervisor, the treating doctor and the case manager. The case manager will advise if you are able to manage the return to work yourself, for example, in the case of low-risk injuries.

Who is the case manager?

The case manager is employed by WorkCover’s claims agent, Employers Mutual. If your employer is a self-insured employer, then it will have its own claims management procedures and case managers. The case manager is responsible for determining and administering workers compensation claims in accordance with the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986 (the Act). You will be working closely with the case manager to manage any workers compensation matters.
What do you do if a worker is injured or becomes ill in your workplace?

1) Be prepared

You can assist your employer to be prepared for workplace injury or illness by helping to put policies, procedures and systems in place in advance (see page 10-11 in the ‘employers’ section for information on procedures and systems). Early identification, treatment and management of work-related injury or illness may reduce the likelihood of an injury or illness becoming a long-term workers compensation claim.

2) Ensure medical assessment takes place

A doctor should be consulted as soon as possible to assess the injury or illness. If the worker needs to go to hospital or to see a medical expert immediately, your employer is required to provide transport, and to meet the cost up to the amount prescribed in the regulations.

3) Advise your employer of the injury or illness

When a worker is injured or becomes ill, you should tell your employer as soon as possible (if they are unaware that this has occurred). It’s also important to make sure your employer is aware of the hazards in your workplace that led to the incident and takes action to address them.

4) Meet with the injured worker to gather information

You should meet with the injured worker as soon as possible to gather information about the injury. Appendix F on page 36 is an example of a first contact checklist that you should use to gather information.

5) Assist the worker to notify the case manager of the injury

You should also assist the worker to either notify the case manager by telephone or complete a claim form to inform Employers Mutual or the self-insured employer about the injury or illness. You should also let the worker know the case manager will provide them with information about the claim process. Your employer may have a supply of claim forms, but they are also available from the WorkCover website www.workcover.com or at some post offices.

Note: If an employer notifies the case manager within two days of receiving notification of the injury or illness and provides wage information as requested, they will not have to pay the first two weeks of income maintenance.

6) Create a file for the injured worker

You should keep a file that contains confidential notes detailing communications with the worker and other parties. You should make sure these files are kept confidential. You should also make sure that you have an Authority to release and obtain information form signed by the worker before you talk to the worker’s doctor or other parties about the worker’s injury or condition.

7) Provide the injured worker with information

You should provide the injured worker with information to help them understand the process involved. Appendix D on page 33, lists some documents published by WorkCover and available on its website at www.workcover.com that the injured worker may find helpful. The injured worker may understandably be concerned about the claim process and whether they will lose out on income due to their injury. The case manager will provide the worker with information about the assessment and management of the claim, including any entitlement to compensation.

8) Identify suitable employment

If the doctor has issued a WorkCover Medical Certificate, you should meet with the worker and supervisor (and other persons as needed) to discuss suitable employment within the worker’s medical restrictions. See page 21 for more information on identifying suitable employment.
9) Liaise with the case manager regarding referral to a vocational rehabilitation consultant

The case manager often makes a referral to a vocational rehabilitation consultant who will prepare a rehabilitation program, coordinate return to work services, and liaise with doctors and employers. If the case manager refers the injured worker to such a consultant, it is important that you work closely with them (see page 20 for more information on vocational rehabilitation consultants).

10) Discuss suitable employment with the injured worker

You should discuss and develop a suitable employment schedule with the injured worker and their supervisor and/or employer. It documents the employment offered to workers who are unable to perform their pre-injury duties because of a work-related injury. (See Appendix E on page 34 for an example of a suitable employment schedule.)

11) Make an offer of suitable employment

When appropriate work is identified, your employer should make an offer of suitable employment to the worker. (See page 23 for more information on offers of suitable employment).

12) Advise the case manager of actions taken

You may at this point wish to consult your first contact checklist to ensure that each stage of the return to work process has been undertaken. (See Appendix F on page 35-36).

13) Monitor worker’s progress and adjust duties

When the worker has returned to modified or restricted duties, you should monitor progress. You should review the worker’s capacity for work by regularly touching base with the worker and the supervisor, negotiating the worker’s duties in line with changes in capacity for work as certified on the WorkCover Medical Certificate provided by the doctor.

If the worker is not recovering as expected you could encourage the worker to ask their general practitioner to complete and follow an injury recovery care plan. This will help facilitate early intervention and the recovery process. For more information about injury recovery care plans see to Appendix H on page 38.

14) Worker returns to normal duties/does not return to normal duties

You can close your file when the worker returns to normal duties. If the worker does not return to normal duties, you should discuss the barriers with the case manager.

Maintaining your profile as coordinator

It is important that people in your workplace know who you are and what you do in your role as a coordinator.

You will need to communicate regularly with management on your progress and any problems you might experience in performing your duties.

You will also need to promote your role within the organisation. Some ways that you could do this include:

• placing posters and flyers in the tea room
• regularly visiting different areas of the workplace so that supervisors, line managers and other employees are reminded of your role
• playing an active role in induction and training programs.

By maintaining your profile in each section of the workplace, you will help ensure the return to work process runs as smoothly as possible.
Who does what in the rehabilitation and return to work process?

You will work closely with a range of people and organisations involved in the rehabilitation and return to work process. Their roles are described below.

WorkCoverSA

WorkCover is funded by employers to manage a balanced and financially sound system that rehabilitates, compensates and returns injured workers to safe workplaces and the community. WorkCover is primarily responsible for the regulation and governance of the South Australian Workers Compensation and Rehabilitation Scheme.

The claims agent (Employers Mutual)

Unless your employer is self-insured, WorkCover’s claims agent – Employers Mutual – is responsible for most of the day-to-day decisions relating to workers’ claims. Employers Mutual case managers use the Injury and Case Management Manual (ICMM) produced by WorkCover as the major reference point for day-to-day claims management services. Contact Employer’s Mutual on (08) 8127 1100. The ICMM can be downloaded from the Workcover website www.workcover.com.

Self-insured employers

Self-insured organisations are registered with WorkCover, but are responsible for managing their own claims, claims costs and financial liabilities resulting from any injuries that take place in their workforce. Self-insurers remain subject to the Act and must provide full benefits to their employees in accordance with the Act.

The case manager

The case manager is employed by the claims agent (or a self-insured employer) to manage workers compensation claims. See page 14 for more on the case manager.

Workers

Workers should take reasonable care to protect their own health and safety and that of others in the workplace. They should also notify their employer immediately in the event of a workplace incident or accident occurring. They should participate in treatment and in rehabilitation programs tailored to their needs, and cooperate with rehabilitation programs for other workers. Injured workers are obliged to accept and perform suitable employment offered by their employer which they have been certified medically fit to perform.

Employers

Employers have a range of responsibilities in terms of injury management and occupational health and safety. These responsibilities are described in detail in the ICMM (see above).

The Act places specific obligations on your employer regarding the return to work process. These include:

• the obligation to offer suitable employment/duties to workers who are injured in employment but have some ability to work
• the obligation to pay wages for performance of alternative or modified duties – the Act provides that if an injured worker undertakes alternative or modified duties, the employer must pay an appropriate wage or salary
• the obligation to fulfil the requirements of the rehabilitation and return to work plan approved by the case manager
• the duty to notify the case manager whenever a worker who has been receiving weekly payments for total incapacity returns to work, there is a change in the weekly earnings of a worker who is receiving weekly payments for partial incapacity, or there is a change in the type of work performed by a worker who is receiving weekly payments for partial incapacity.

Supervisors
Supervisors and line managers have a key role to play in managing the return to work of their injured workers. You should encourage them to take ownership of the process in their particular section of the workplace, ensuring they understand the worker's injury and restrictions for work.

Health providers
Health providers help with medical or health care so an injured worker can return to work and/or regain their independence. Doctors, physiotherapists and health care specialists are all health providers and they should all work together in the rehabilitation and return to work process.

Rehabilitation consultants
There are two kinds of rehabilitation consultants that can help injured workers return to safe work or the community. There are health professionals who may also help with rehabilitation, such as occupational therapists, physiotherapists and psychologists. There are also vocational rehabilitation consultants who coordinate return to work services, including liaising with doctors and employers. (See page 20 for more information on vocational rehabilitation consultants).
Working with medical experts and providers

Doctors

Doctors play an important role in the rehabilitation and return to work of injured workers, so you will need to establish good lines of communication with an injured worker’s doctor.

The doctor can provide you with information about the worker’s capacity for work. If this information is not clear from the WorkCover Medical Certificate completed by the doctor, then you may need to contact the doctor for clarification. Check with the case manager first in case they have spoken to the doctor already, before you make a call or send a fax.

An Authority to release and obtain information, signed by the injured worker must accompany requests for information from a doctor, medical expert or hospital service provider. The signed authority should say that the injured worker gives permission for a doctor, medical expert or hospital service provider to give the employer (or coordinator) information about the work-related injury.

Appendix G on page 37 is an example of an Authority to release and obtain information form.

Here are some ways that you can enhance your communication with doctors:

- If you are having difficulties contacting the doctor by telephone, ask the receptionist for the most convenient time to call back.
- Forward an introductory letter with information relevant to the injured worker and suitable employment to be offered (by fax, email or post).
- Go with the worker to see the doctor, if they want you to, to discuss the duties that can be offered.
- Invite the doctor to visit your workplace and review the duties (ensure approval for this to occur has been obtained from the case manager, otherwise your employer may have to cover the cost of this visit).
- It may also be useful to encourage the injured worker to ask their treating doctor to complete and follow an injury recovery and care plan (see Appendix H).

Medical expert services

There are a number of medical expert services that may help a worker with rehabilitation and return to work. These services are provided by experts such as occupational therapists, physiotherapists and psychologists. The case manager (or self-insured employer) will decide if any of these services are needed in the early stages of return to work. You will help them to decide if these services are necessary by sharing information about the workplace and issues that may be impacting on return to work. These expert services include:

- an activities of daily living assessment – where an occupational therapist or physiotherapist assesses a worker’s level of functioning regarding personal care and recreational and social activities, usually in the worker’s home environment
- a functional capacity evaluation – a series of standardised tests, administered by occupational therapists and physiotherapists, used to assess a worker’s functional capacities for work (e.g., the ability to lift or bend, or the number of hours the worker can work)
• a graduated return to work program – a program of work practice and work guidelines designed by occupational therapists or physiotherapists to increase a worker’s tolerance for the physical demands of work (known as ‘work hardening’), the purpose being to assist a worker to maintain his or her employment while undertaking rehabilitation and regaining fitness

• a job analysis – an assessment conducted by an occupational therapist or physiotherapist of the physical demands of the job, to determine a worker’s capacity to undertake the tasks and to make recommendations for modifying the way tasks are undertaken or for the provision of aids or equipment

• a worksite assessment – attendance by a physiotherapist or an occupational therapist at a worker’s workplace in order to obtain an overview of the workplace and determine the availability of suitable duties

• a work simulation (group program) – a graduated program of supervised activities, administered by an occupational therapist, to simulate work conditions and the physical demands of duties

• a vocational assessment – a test administered by a psychologist to identify potential and alternative career employment options where a worker cannot undertake the same duties they performed pre-injury.

Vocational rehabilitation consultants

The case manager (or self-insured employer) will determine whether an injured worker should be referred to a vocational rehabilitation consultant, who will then work with the injured worker to develop a rehabilitation and return to work program as part of the return to work plan. You will help the case manager to decide if referral is necessary by sharing information about the workplace and issues that may be impacting on return to work.

As the contact person for the employer, you will work internally with the supervisor and other employees on a day-to-day basis to assist the worker and supervisor to undertake their responsibilities according to the rehabilitation and return to work plan.

A vocational rehabilitation consultant or medical expert may be needed when:

• a rehabilitation and return to work plan is required

• the worker has sustained injuries that are so severe that a lengthy period of convalescence is likely

• injury or resulting disability prevents the worker returning to pre-injury duties in the long term so alternative job options may need to be explored

• circumstances have changed eg, pre-injury duties are no longer available

• industrial issues are present that may impact on the return to work process

• medical guidelines regarding capacity for work are unclear

• you need assistance with identifying suitable employment

• the claim is disputed or undetermined (and in such cases, a vocational rehabilitation consultant may be required to handle psycho-social issues that arise eg, because of conflict between the employer and the injured worker about whether an injury is work-related)

• other non-medical factors are impeding recovery or return to work (such as psychological issues).
Providing suitable employment for your injured worker

If you have an injured worker who is ready to return to work, you will be contacted by the case manager (unless your employer is self-insured) to discuss suitable employment in the workplace. Return to work can begin on a full-time or part-time basis, with the worker undertaking pre-injury or alternative duties, depending on the doctor’s assessment of their capabilities.

Obligations

Legally, your employer is obliged to identify suitable employment for the injured worker, under section 58B of the Act. This means your employer must provide safe, suitable employment that a worker is fit to perform, unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so. If your employer fails to provide suitable employment when able to do so, they risk being charged a supplementary levy or being prosecuted by WorkCover.

Likewise, injured workers are obliged to accept and undertake suitable employment offered by your employer, and for which they have been certified medically fit by their doctor. If a worker refuses to undertake work that has been offered and that they are capable of performing, they risk their income maintenance payments being discontinued.

If your employer concludes that they cannot provide suitable employment for the injured worker, you should let the case manager know immediately.

Steps to identifying suitable employment*

When you are identifying appropriate work for an injured worker, you should consider the following:

**Step 1: Medical information**

What are the restriction and capacity details on the WorkCover Medical Certificate?

What other medical information is available?

**Step 2: Modified duties**

What is the injured worker’s normal job? Consider modifying the job – what parts of their normal job are within the injured worker’s medical restrictions? Could the injured worker safely perform some/all of their normal duties with assistance (eg, special tools, aids or a buddy system)? Refer to available medical information WorkCover Medical Certificate).

**Step 3: Injured worker consideration**

Where do they live? Has the injury impacted upon the worker’s ability to get to and from work? Will the worker require travel assistance to return to work?

**Step 4: Alternative duties (suitable duties)**

Are there any other duties available that the injured worker may be able to perform safely? Consider if there is other work that needs to be done in your workplace. Consider if the injured worker can safely perform any other tasks or roles.

*Adapted from Suitable employment for injured workers. A step by step guide to identifying suitable duties. WorkSafe Victoria.
**Step 5: Other factors**

How does the injured worker’s age, education, skills, work experience and personal circumstances impact upon their return to work?

Consider whether the injured worker’s age, education, skills and work experience make them suitable for performing duties other than those associated with their pre-injury work. Consider the worker’s resume/personnel file, if you are able to access it.

**Step 6: Document the suitable employment in a schedule, then make an offer of suitable employment.**

Remember to consult the injured worker and their doctor when preparing the offer of suitable employment (see page 23 for more on offers of suitable employment). If no duties are available or identified, contact the case manager to discuss what steps you need to take.

---

**Definitions of suitable duties and suitable employment**

**Suitable duties** are those duties a worker is fit to undertake, and they must be identified in the worker’s rehabilitation and return to work plan.

**Suitable employment** involves a contract of employment which provides suitable work for which the worker is fit, and which is similar to or the same as their pre-injury role. This may be full-time or part-time to suit the worker’s capacity. When identifying suitable employment for a worker, consider these points:

- The nature and extent of the worker’s disability
- Their work experience
- Their age, education and skills
Developing a suitable employment schedule

An employer (unless they are self-insured) does not have the authority to put into place a formal rehabilitation program or a return to work plan. This plan is developed by a rehabilitation consultant appointed by the case manager. However, you, in your role as coordinator, are expected to develop a suitable employment schedule for an injured worker on your employer’s behalf. (Note: The worker may not necessarily have a return to work plan, depending on the case manager’s recommendation, so some of the information about return to work may be included in the schedule instead).

A suitable employment schedule should be individually tailored to meet the needs of an injured worker’s restrictions, skills and capabilities.

The schedule’s content could include:

- worker’s name, supervisor’s name, department or location
- employment details, such as current status, normal job and duties available
- details of capacity for work and medical restrictions as set out in the most recent WorkCover Medical Certificate.
- details of the proposed duties
- functional limitations in relation to usual job and proposed duties
- goals or objectives of the suitable employment schedule
- review mechanisms and dates.

Appendix E on page 34 is an example of a suitable employment schedule.

What is an offer of suitable employment?

When the worker is not able to return to pre-injury duties you will, at an appropriate time identified in consultation with the case manager, doctor and vocational rehabilitation consultant, work with your employer to identify suitable employment.

When appropriate work is identified, your employer should make an offer of suitable employment to the worker. This should be in writing. It may be documented in a rehabilitation program or rehabilitation and return to work plan, as long as it is signed by the person with the authority to make the offer.

The offer of suitable employment should include an outline of the worker’s role and responsibilities, the tasks to be performed, the position the worker should report to, any other requirements of the position and information on remuneration, like any other job description.
When the injured worker returns to work

Returning injured or ill workers to safe workplaces is the main goal of everyone in the workers rehabilitation and compensation system.

As your employer's coordinator you will play a key role in assisting the worker to return to work and safely remain there.

Once the worker has returned to work either full-time or part-time you should notify the case manager.

You should also monitor the worker's progress after their return to work and ensure there are no problems. This can also prevent re-injury later on.

Remember that the claims agent must be notified within 14 days of a worker returning to work.
Employers Mutual – Client Services

Employers Mutual is WorkCover’s claims agent, and its Client Services Unit offers information and education sessions on minimising costs to your business as well as improving injury management. Employers Mutual can be contacted on (08) 8127 1100 (or 1300 365 105 for country and interstate callers).

WorkCoverSA’s Return to Work Inspectorate and Support Unit

The Return to Work Inspectorate and Support Unit provides education and advice on injury management. Functions of this unit include:

- ensuring employers meet their legislative obligations
- offering support and advice to employers about their obligations
- investigating further where required, including possible prosecution or imposition of supplementary levy
- assessing and registering training organisations that are able to provide the training program for coordinators
- collating and monitoring the quality of training provided
- maintaining a record of registered training organisations
- maintaining a webpage for coordinators and their training requirements at www.workcover.com.

Contact the Return to Work Inspectorate and Support Unit on 13 18 55 or email rrtwc-support@workcover.com.

WorkCoverSA

www.workcover.com

Self Insurers of South Australia

www.sisa.net.au
Other useful websites:

- **WorkSafe Victoria** – www.workcover.vic.gov.au
- **QComp (Queensland)** – www.qcomp.com.au
- **WorkCover NSW** – www.workcover.nsw.gov.au
- **ComCare** – www.comcare.gov.au
- **Disability Information and Resource Centre** – www.dircsa.org.au
- **SafeWork SA** – www.safework.sa.gov.au
- **Employers Mutual** – www.employersmutual.com.au
- **Business SA** – www.business-sa.com
The following appendices may help in the workplace when you develop your systems to manage workplace injuries.

The policy and procedures and the forms are templates that you can copy and adapt to your own situation and workplace.

You can download these templates and others that you might find useful from the WorkCover website www.workcover.com.
Appendix A: Legislation
Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986

Section 28D—Rehabilitation and return to work coordinators

(1) Subject to this section, an employer must appoint a rehabilitation and return to work coordinator (referred to in this section as a ‘RRTWC’).

(2) A RRTWC—
   (a) must be an employee of the employer; and
   (b) must be based in South Australia.

(3) The employer must appoint the coordinator—
   (a) within 6 months after the requirement to be registered under Part 5 first arises (disregarding any exemption that may be available under that Part); or
   (b) within a later period approved by the Corporation.

(4) A RRTWC has the following functions:
   (a) to assist workers suffering from compensable disabilities, where prudent and practicable, to remain at or return to work as soon as possible after the occurrence of the disability;
   (b) to assist with liaising with the Corporation in the preparation and implementation of a rehabilitation and return to work plan for a disabled worker;
   (c) to liaise with any persons involved in the rehabilitation of, or the provision of medical services to, workers;
   (d) to monitor the progress of a disabled worker’s capacity to return to work;
   (e) to take steps to, as far as practicable, prevent the occurrence of a secondary disability when a worker returns to work;
   (f) to perform other functions prescribed by the regulations.

(5) An employer must—
   (a) provide such facilities and assistance as are reasonably necessary to enable a RRTWC to perform his or her functions under this section; and
   (b) comply with any training or operational guidelines published by the Corporation from time to time for the purposes of this section.

(6) If a vacancy occurs in the office of a co-ordinator under this section, the employer must make a new appointment to the office within the prescribed period.
   Maximum penalty: $10 000.

(7) The regulations may exempt an employer, or employers of a prescribed class, from a requirement under this section.
Appendix B: Rights and responsibilities in the return to work process

**Employer rights**
Employers have a right to:

- seek assistance in the worker’s rehabilitation and return to work
- ask the case manager to review a claim if they believe that weekly payments to a worker should be stopped or reduced
- ask the case manager to arrange for an injured worker to attend an examination by a recognised medical expert
- ask the case manager to provide copies of medical reports and provide a report on an injured worker’s medical progress and incapacity for work
- seek a review of the decision made about the claim
- ask the case manager to take into consideration any other relevant factors.

**Employer responsibilities**
Employers have a responsibility to:

- provide a safe working environment
- provide safe, suitable employment, and be actively involved in an injured worker’s rehabilitation and return to work plan
- keep in touch with the case manager until the injured worker is doing full-time normal work (this includes notifying the case manager if there is any change in type of work or hours).

**Worker rights**
Injured workers have a right to:

- make an initial notification of an injury or lodge a claim for compensation
- choose their treating medical practitioner
- have all personal information kept confidential
- have a representative present at any meeting to discuss any claim for compensation or rehabilitation
- get independent advice before signing any documentation
- get a copy of all medical reports relating to a claim
- get a copy of the current rehabilitation and return to work plan and be consulted in its preparation
- have reasonable out-of-pocket medical expenses reimbursed
- have an interpreter
- have an advocate.

**Worker responsibilities**
Injured workers have a responsibility to:

- report the injury to their employer or supervisor as soon as possible
- seek appropriate treatment for the injury
- provide the employer with a WorkCover Medical Certificate if they lose time from work and want to make a claim
- participate actively in treatment and rehabilitation and comply with the requirements of a rehabilitation and return to work plan
- undertake suitable tasks the doctor says the worker is fit to undertake, once a return to work plan is in place
- attend an examination by a doctor or vocational rehabilitation consultant nominated by the case manager (for an assessment only).
Claims agent/self-insured employers rights
The claims agent/self-insured employer has a right to:

• be involved in and kept informed about the rehabilitation process
• be provided with copies of current prescribed medical certificates, rehabilitation programs and rehabilitation and return to work plans
• determine the reasonableness of costs
• arrange for an injured worker to attend an examination by a recognised medical expert
• review and determine the income maintenance paid to an injured worker.

Claims agent/self-insured employers responsibilities
The claims agent/self insured employer has a responsibility to:

• determine claims and assess the need for rehabilitation promptly following a work-related injury
• establish and approve an appropriate rehabilitation program or rehabilitation and return to work plan
• provide appropriate rehabilitation services to injured workers
• actively participate in planning, implementation and review of the worker’s rehabilitation program or rehabilitation and return to work with the agreed primary goal being a return to suitable employment
• answer any queries from an injured worker or their employer regarding a worker’s claim.

Coordinator rights
The coordinator has a right to:

• ask the case manager for assistance in an injured worker’s rehabilitation and return to work
• be supported by their employer and by other employees when performing their functions as a coordinator.

Coordinator responsibilities
The coordinator has a responsibility to:

• maintain confidentiality in relation to an injured worker’s compensation claim
• be unbiased and impartial in their dealings with an injured worker.
Appendix C: Rehabilitation and return to work policy and procedures document (sample only)

OUR COMMITMENT AND POLICY

We <insert organisation's name> are committed to returning our injured workers to safe, suitable work and recognise and accept our obligation to assist workers to stay in or return to work if injured or ill because of their work.

1. We will prevent injury and illness by providing a safe and healthy working environment.
2. We will support the injured worker and ensure that early return to work is a normal expectation.
3. We will provide suitable duties for an injured worker as soon as possible.
4. We will ensure that our injured workers (and anyone representing them) are aware of their rights and responsibilities.
5. We will consult with our workers to ensure that the return to work process operates as smoothly as possible.
6. We will maintain the confidentiality and security of injured worker records.
7. We will keep the worker in employment, but if this is not possible we will give WorkCover and the worker 28 days notice of intention to terminate the employment of the worker (usually 28 days).
8. We will provide such facilities and assistance as are reasonably necessary to enable a rehabilitation and return to work coordinator to perform their functions under section 28D of the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986 (the Act) and comply with any training or operational guidelines published by WorkCover for the purposes of the Act.

PROCEDURES

Notification of incidents

- We will ensure that an injured worker receives appropriate first aid and/or medical treatment as soon as possible.
- All incidents must be notified to the supervisor/manager and rehabilitation and return to work coordinator as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours.
- If a work-related injury occurs, the worker, employer or person on behalf of the worker should phone either the claims agent Employers Mutual Limited on 1300 365 105 or WorkCoverSA on 13 18 55 or follow our own processes as a self-insured employer.
- All incidents will be recorded in the incident register noting the corrective action taken, and tabled at the monthly safety committee meeting, and the worker(s) involved will be informed of the outcome.

Rehabilitation and return to work

We <insert organisation's name> are committed to the rehabilitation and return to work of employees who have been injured in the course of their duties and have appointed and trained a rehabilitation and return to work coordinator to assist by:

- maintaining contact with the injured worker and encouraging his or her return to work
- supporting and maintaining regular communication with the appointed case manager and treating doctor regarding the return to work options of the worker
- working with the case manager, treating doctor, other health providers and the injured worker to achieve their optimum work capacity
Suitable employment

- When the treating doctor advises that an injured worker is capable of returning to work, we will actively participate in the development of their rehabilitation and return to work plan.
- We undertake to provide suitable employment that is consistent with medical advice, and is meaningful, productive and suitable for the injured worker’s physical and psychological capacity.
- Depending on the injured worker’s individual circumstances, our suitable employment may be:
  - at the same worksite or a different worksite
  - the same job with different hours or modified duties
  - a different job
  - full-time or part-time.
- If suitable employment is not immediately available, we undertake to provide suitable duties as an interim measure.

Name of rehabilitation and return to work coordinator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approved by: ____________________________________________

Signed: ____________________________________________

Date: ____________________________________________
Appendix D: Injured worker information pack

The injured worker may be provided with the following information published by WorkCoverSA:

- Injured at work – all you need to know about what happens next
- Steps to recovery for injured workers – Your guide to getting back to work and a normal life
- Travel reimbursement form
- Help when you’re not satisfied – A guide to workers compensation disputes
- WorkCover Claim form

The documents above may all be sourced from WorkCover or through www.workcover.com.
### Worker details

| Worker's full name: | | |
| Location/department: | Supervisor: | |
| Date of disability: | Disability: | Pre-injury occupation: |
| Restrictions as per current WorkCover Medical Certificate: | |

### Suitable employment details

| Start date: | End date: |
| Specify position: | |
| Work location: | Suitable work supervisor: | Contact number: |
| Duties to be performed: | |

| hours per day | days per week |
| Commencement time: | Finishing time: | Breaks: |

Is modification to the workplace required? YES ☐ NO ☐
Specify:

Other considerations:

### Employer's signature | Date | Worker's signature | Date
---|---|---|---
Suitable employment schedule to be reviewed following next medical review and/or the provision of a new WorkCover Medical Certificate.

Date duties are to be reviewed/revised:

Copy of suitable employment schedule sent to: Case manager: ☐ Doctor: ☐
### Appendix F: Rehabilitation and return to work coordinator first contact checklist (sample only)

**CONFIDENTIAL**

- Name of worker
- Location/department
- Contact details
- Current job role
- (Brief description of role and physical demands)
- Usual hours/days per week
- Manager/Supervisor’s name
- Manager/Supervisor phone number
- Date of injury
- Nature of injury
- Cause and place of injury
- Claim number (If known)
- Case manager’s name
- Case manager contact phone number
- Name of doctor
- Doctor contact details
- Medical certificate details
- Referrals to specialists
## Appendix F: Rehabilitation and return to work coordinator first contact checklist (sample only) continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ All available information and paperwork received regarding injury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ All workers compensation forms completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Details of wages obtained (for time-lost injuries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Workers compensation information pack given to worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Authority to release and obtain information form signed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Worker medical restrictions (if any) identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Suitable employment schedule:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) suitable meaningful duties identified/negotiated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) outline tasks of negotiated job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) outline constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) review and reporting dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) supervisor/manager, commitment acknowledged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Special needs assessed ie, ability to drive, culture/language/religious needs (discuss with case manager)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Contact made with case manager Date:_______________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Copies of workers compensation documents given to worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ All documentation sent to the case manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Payroll notified (change in wage, hours, department)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Completed by:  

Signed:  

Date:
Appendix G: Authority to release and obtain information (sample only)

CONFIDENTIAL

The aim of your return to work program is to assist you to return to or maintain in suitable employment. In addition to speaking with your case manager, your employer's rehabilitation and return to work coordinator (known here as the coordinator) may need to discuss confidential information relevant to your injury with your doctor, medical provider/s, managers, supervisors and in some instances other people/organisations.

By completing this authority to exchange information (the Authority) you are giving your coordinator permission to exchange information reasonably relevant to the management of your rehabilitation and/or return to work.

I (please print): ____________________________

authorise my coordinator from (specify organisation): ____________________________

to provide/obtain information relating to my injury/illness (specify): ____________________________

sustained at work on or about (date): ________________ or other information with my return to work to/from the following people/organisations. I have ticked below to assist in the management of my rehabilitation and/or return to work. However, if I have specified names rather than ticked boxes, I limit the authority only to those people/organisations.

☐ <Insert company name> Rehabilitation and return to work coordinator

☐ Assessing and treating medical doctors and service providers

☐ Contracted rehabilitation consultant

☐ Other (eg, manager, supervisor etc)

I approve a copy of the Authority, including an electronic version, being treated as the original. The Authority is valid for the duration of my claim unless it is superseded by a new Authority or until such time as either I or my representative revokes authority.

Signed: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________
Appendix H: Injury recovery care plans

Injury recovery care plans (IRCPs) were introduced in October 2008 for general practitioners for the management of injured workers in the first 12 weeks of injury. IRCPs assist general practitioners in planning, documenting and following a structured clinical approach when managing an injured workers injury. For the injured worker, IRCPs provide clear information about recovery expectations, treatments and goals. They also provide timely information for the purposes of triggering early responses to issues or needs otherwise not identified during the first 12 weeks.

There are two IRCPs (shown below) which a general practitioner can complete – one between one and five weeks after the date of injury, and one between six and 12 weeks after the date of injury.

If during the first 12 weeks of injury, an injured worker at your place of employment has ongoing symptoms or incapacity which, in your opinion, are unlikely to resolve within one week, encourage the injured worker to ask their general practitioner to complete and follow an IRCP. This will help facilitate early intervention and the recovery process.

For more information on IRCPs, visit www.workcover.com/TREAT and refer to the link under the Resources tab.
This guide has been developed with help from the following references:


Q-COMP. Assistance in developing workplace rehabilitation policy and procedures.

Q-COMP. The Workers Compensation Regulatory Authority. Assistance in developing workplace rehabilitation policy and procedures.

Q-COMP. Workplace policy and procedures. Checklist for employers.


Victorian WorkCover Authority. Participant Workbook – role of RTW RRTWC Edition


Victorian WorkCover Authority. What to do if a worker is injured.


WorkCoverSA. Injury Management. 5 easy steps for getting back to safe work, early

Notes