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| **ABC COMPANY – Occupational Health and Safety Program** | | |
| **Return to Work (RTW)** | | Issue date: DD/MM/YYYY  Review date: DD/MM/YYYY |
| Approved by: | Reviewed by: | |

Please note the following document is a sample. Review carefully and modify this document to meet the needs and requirements of your organization.

# 1.0 PURPOSE

**ABC Company** is committed to providing a safe workplace for all workers. In the event of an injury or illness, the following procedures are to be followed from the time of injury or illness to the completion of the RTW.

# 2.0 DEFINITIONS

**Accommodation:** Accommodation is any change or adaptation to the work, hours of work, work duties or workplace, and includes the provision of equipment or assistive devices. In any specific case, accommodation can include, but is not limited to, any of the options outlined in this policy or an appropriate combination thereof.

**Alternate Duties:** Alternate duties are non-pre-injury duties within the worker’s functional abilities

**Alternative Work:** A different job or bundle of duties (not the pre-injury job or duties) that are suitable and are provided to accommodate a worker who has temporary or permanent functional restrictions as a result of the injury.

**Assistive Devices:** Assistive devices include aids/attachments specifically designed for the worker and/or required by the worker to perform job-related activities.

**Ease Back:** A gradual return to pre-injury hours of work achieved by increasing the number of hours worked over a defined time frame agreed upon by the workplace parties utilizing the functional abilities information relating to the worker. While the pre-injury hours of work vary, the pre-injury duties are the same.

**Joint Meaningful Consultation:** Requires a meeting of all parties (representation from management and workers) where the sharing of information to all parties enables full participation. There must be a disclosure process of relevant facts, issues, policies, etc, with management providing an opportunity for input, and must assess the input from all parties when designing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and revising the return-to-work program. The final decision is Managements’; however, the process towards making the final decision must be “open minded”.

**Meaningful consultation:**  Consultation that: (1) provides information to all parties to

enable full participation, (2) provides opportunities for input and (3) assesses the input of the parties in the program design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and revision.

**Modifications:** Changes to the job schedule, equipment, organization of work, and/or facilities.

**Modified Work:** Changing the job duties of the pre-injury position required to accommodate the worker’s functional restrictions as a result of the injury. Includes altering or removing some duties; however, the worker is still working primarily in his or her pre-injury position.

# 3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

**Employer:**

* Provide first aid immediately or arrange (and pay) for transportation to medical care, if needed.
* Pay the worker’s wages for the day of injury.
* Complete and submit a Form 7 to WorkplaceNL within 3 days, if the injury or illness involves health care treatment, lost time or lost wages.
* Investigate the incident.
* Contact the worker as soon as possible after the injury.
* Maintain communication throughout their recovery and return to work.
* Communicate RTW processes to workers including the injury reporting system, the availability of RTW, procedures to be followed from the time of injury or illness to the completion of the RTW, etc.
* Develop a RTW plan, in consultation with the worker to make sure the plan is effective at progressing the worker toward pre-injury duties. Review as necessary.
* Attempt to identify suitable work together with the worker. Work that is safe, within your worker’s functional abilities and restores your worker’s pre-injury wages.
* Submit RTW plans to WorkplaceNL within 5 days of receiving the worker’s functional information.
* Follow up with the worker to make sure you are receiving health care provider forms within 24 hours of each visit.
* Monitor RTW plans by scheduling regular meetings to assess progress, obtain current functional abilities information and make any adjustments to RTW plan, as needed.
* Notify WorkplaceNL of any issues that may arise during the RTW plan, including accommodation issues and reporting disputes.
* Contact WorkplaceNL for assistance if the RTW plan is not progressing or if there are difficulties implementing plan.
* Maintain confidentiality of the worker.

**Supervisor:**

* Initiate and maintain early and supportive contact with the worker as soon as possible after the injury or illness.
* Establish a follow up schedule with the worker and document progress.
* Evaluate the success of the RTW plan with the worker and implement any necessary adjustments or improvements to ensure success.
* Maintain confidentiality of the worker.

**Worker:**

* Obtain first aid or health care immediately, if required. Notify the health care provider that it is a workplace injury.
* Report injury to Supervisor or as soon as possible, on the same day.
* Complete Worker’s Report of Injury (Form 6), send to the WorkplaceNL and provide a copy to **ABC Company**.
* Maintain regular contact with **ABC Company** throughout recovery and attend scheduled RTW meetings as needed.
* Comply with medical and rehabilitation treatment and arrange appointments during non-work hours, wherever possible.
* Ensure that all heath care provider forms are returned to the employer within 24 hours.
* Help identify potential RTW duties with your employer.
* Discuss RTW options with your health care providers.
* Notify WorkplaceNL of any issues that may arise during the RTW plan, including accommodation issues and reporting disputes.

# 4.0 PROCEDURE

**ABC Company** will ensure all workers receive information and training related to the RTW procedures. Changes or updates to the procedure will be made in consultation with workers and communicated. The RTW procedure and process will be reviewed by management, supervisors and workers at least once per year, or as needed.

Upon receipt of the Physician's Report Form (MD), the **Human Resources/Disability Manager** will review the functional abilities information with the worker. This information will be used in conjunction with the worker’s job description, work requirements, and Worker’s Compensation legislation to identify suitable work available.

**ABC Company** and the injured worker will consider all possible job options in accordance with the Hierarchy of Return to Work as outlined in WorkplaceNL’s Policy RE-18. Once **ABC Company** and the employee agree to the job duties to be performed, schedule, etc. a RTW plan will be sent to WorkplaceNL within **5 days** of receipt of the Physician's Report Form (MD).

The employee’s supervisor will be notified of the return-to-work plan and will be responsible for monitoring the employee’s progress while at work. Any problems/issues will be reported to **Human Resources/Disability Manager**.

Communication will be weekly throughout the return-to-work process and the employee is expected to notify the **Human Resources/Disability Manager** if there is a change in their condition, any new/changed medical appointments. This will enable timely changes to the work schedule that may be required.

## 3.1 Dispute Resolution Guidelines

**ABC Company** recognizes that from time-to-time situations may arise where the employer and/or the employee may disagree with items throughout the return-to-work process, and there may be times when a resolution cannot be found. If the issue impedes or delays the return-to-work process or the re-employment obligation, then this guideline will be used as the first step in attempting to resolve the dispute to the satisfaction of all parties. The employer and/or the employee have the right to contact WorkplaceNL at any time to seek assistance.

**Human Resources/Disability Manager** will act on behalf of **ABC Company** when handling disputes with the injured employee. All reasonable steps will be taken to attempt to resolve the dispute at this level. This may include contacting or reviewing information from internal and external resources such as health care providers, WorkplaceNL, Occupational Health & Safety Committee, supervisor and senior management. If the dispute cannot be resolved internally, WorkplaceNL must be contacted and made aware of the issue at hand. WorkplaceNL employees will act as a mediator in these cases and will likely set up a meeting with all parties to discuss the issue(s).

This guideline has been developed in consultation with the occupational health and safety committee and workers.

## 3.2 Joint and Meaningful Consultation

All the elements of the return-to-work program must be developed through a joint mechanism for meaningful consultation with employees designated either by their co-workers or through union constitution, where applicable. At least half of the participants in the joint mechanism for consultation must be representatives of workers.

Documentation can be used as evidence to demonstrate joint and meaningful consultation, and would include date, persons involved and official nature of meeting. Examples of documentation would include minutes of meetings, newsletters communicating the consultation process or any other information that is determined appropriate by WorkplaceNL.

As part of the evaluation process of the return-to-work program, as detailed below, joint and meaningful consultation will take place on a minimum of an annual basis. This frequency may be increased when complex return-to-work issues arise.

**5.0 PROGRAM EVALUATION**

The importance of ongoing evaluation and commitment to continuous improvement of the Return-to-Work Program is critical to its success. Evaluation of the program will require defined methods of measuring performance. The specific data points that are measured need to be identified and defined so that there is a confidence that the measurement is consistent from year to year. **ABC Company Operations Manager** will be responsible for ensuring that the program evaluation procedure is facilitated in the organization.

To ensure we continue to be progressive and current on effective Return-to-Work programming ideas and to meet the requirements of PRIME, this program will be reviewed and revised as needed through a joint meaningful consultation on an annual basis. Evaluation throughout the year will be in the form of:

* Online surveys/questionnaires
* Regular evaluation review (using data from tracking system)
* Organizational targets

The annual evaluation will identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program, which may include:

* Worker knowledge of RTW program
* Worker satisfaction with RTW outcomes
* Costs associated with injuries
* Workers’ compensation costs and premium
* Injury duration

Online Surveys and Questionnaires will be forwarded to all staff at intervals throughout the year, as required. These evaluation tools will ensure all staff remains aware of the Return-to-Work program and the corporate culture which supports effective and safe Return-to-Work planning.

**ABC Company’s** return-to-work statistics must be regularly reviewed to ensure that the Return-to-Work program is continuing to meet the needs of the organization. Return-to-work statistics and targets are incorporated into strategic planning and organizational goals. These require review on a quarterly basis.

The findings of any evaluation will be communicated to all employees through a coordinated effort from both the workers and management. It has deemed that the OHS Committee will act as representation for **ABC Company** regarding the joint and meaningful consultation and evaluate the return-to-work program accordingly. Results of the evaluation will be posted in the workplace, alongside the OHS committee meeting minutes.

# 6.0 PROTECTING CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Medical and functional information will only be shared with relevant parties on a need-to-know basis. Information will be stored securely (digital or physical) and handled with discretion.

Any access, use, or disclosure of personal health information will be done in accordance with the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA). Breaches of confidentiality will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action.