

# Quick facts:

## Facts for return-to-work programs

### Return-to-work planning

WorkplaceNL recognizes the importance of developing and implementing workplace-based return-to-work programs. These programs allow employers and employees to take a proactive approach in assisting injured workers to return to safe and productive work activities as soon as possible following an injury. An effective return-to-work program can provide many benefits to all partners in the return-to-work process.

Return-to-work planning generally involves two main activities: (1) accommodating the injured worker's functional limitations and (2) co-ordinating services for the injured worker. The return-to-work planning process includes several key steps including communication, advice and support, accessing timely information, developing, implementing and monitoring a return-to-work plan and follow up after the worker has returned to work.

Organizations that make the appropriately trained personnel available for these activities usually experience a higher success rate in returning a worker to work in a safe and suitable manner.

#### What is a return-to-work planning protocol?

It is a consistent approach to return-to-work planning through a pre-defined process.

#### What can an employer do to help my employees return to work after an injury?

The first thing to do is to have an appropriately trained person from the organization contact the employee within 24-48 hours after the injury. The initial contact should be to offer support and provide information to the employee about the return-to-work program.

#### What if the doctor indicates that the injured employee cannot do his/her own job?

The goal is to accommodate the workplace to help the worker perform duties that are as close as possible to his or her pre-injury job.

When determining suitable job options the first step is to review the functional abilities information provided by the doctor/ chiropractor in conjunction with the worker in accordance with WorkplaceNL's Policy Re-18 "Hierarchy of Return to Work and Accommodation."

#### Is an employer required to take a worker back to work if they cannot do their pre-injury job?

Yes. All employers are required to cooperate in assisting a worker to return to work by providing suitable and available employment. If work is available that is consistent with what the worker can do, then the employer is required to offer it to the worker. Further, employers who regularly employ 20 or more workers may have a re-employment obligation under section 101 of the *Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act, 2022 (the Act)*.

#### Will WorkplaceNL provide assistance in return-to-work planning if requested?

Yes. WorkplaceNL has trained staff that are available to provide advice and guidance to employers and employees. For assistance in developing a return-to-work plan for an individual worker you should contact an early and safe return to work facilitator at WorkplaceNL.

#### What if the employer and worker cannot agree on an appropriate return-to-work plan?

If an employer and a worker cannot agree on a return-to-work plan then both parties are required by law to notify WorkplaceNL as soon as possible. WorkplaceNL will help determine the cause of the disagreement and offer assistance where necessary.

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### What are the benefits of return-to-work planning?

#### **Benefits to the Employer**

- Minimizes workers' compensation costs.
- Meets the requirements of the *Act*.
- Reduces hiring and training costs.
- Keeps experienced employees.
- Improves employer/employee relations.
- Maintains productivity.

#### **Benefits to the Worker**

- Retains productive employment and security.
- Maintains income.
- Maintains job skills.
- Retains Canada Pension and Employment Insurance eligibility.
- Maintains self worth, family stability and social ties.
- Participates in work activities while recovering from injury.
- Reduces future uncertainty.

## Your PRIME Readiness **CHECKLIST**

### A joint mechanism for consultation is required by employers with over \$48,000 in average annual base assessments.

- Does the business/organization have a written protocol in place that outlines the steps to be followed from the time of the injury to the completion of the return to work?

#### **Criteria**

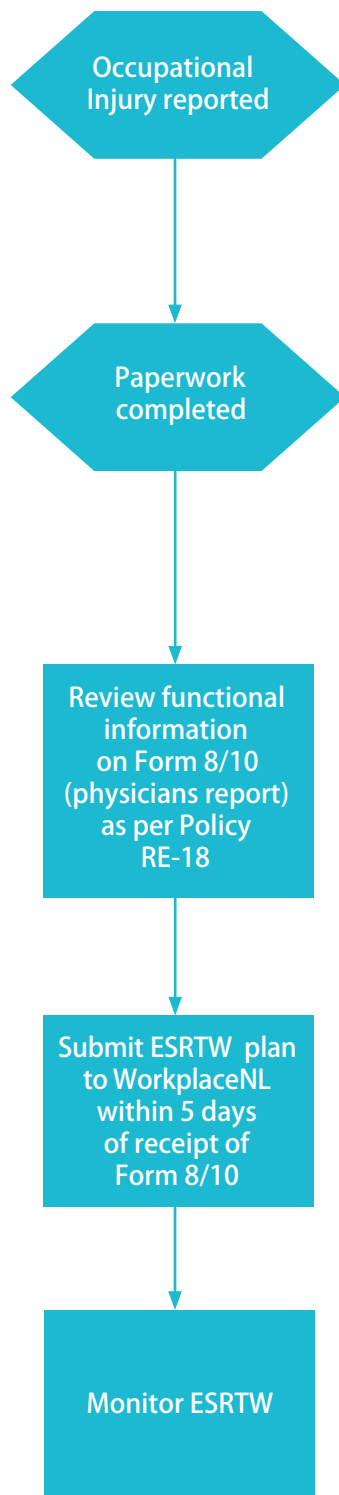
- Return-to-work planning must be done in accordance with Sections 100 and 101 of the *Act*.

- The business/organization must follow WorkplaceNL's Policy RE-18 "Hierarchy of Return to Work and Accommodation" in return-to-work planning.
- The business/organization must use return-to-work plans or alternate forms acceptable to WorkplaceNL in return-to-work planning.
- The business/organization must involve the worker in the return-to-work planning process in accordance with Policy RE-02 "The Goal of Early and Safe Return to Work and the Role of the Parties".
- The business/organization must protect the confidentiality of the information being used in the return-to-work process.

### For more information on return to work program injury reporting please contact

St. John's	t 709.778.1000	t 1.800.563.9000
Grand Falls-Windsor	t 709.489.1600	t 1.800.563.3448
Corner Brook	t 709.637.2700	t 1.800.563.2772

# Return to Work Planning Protocol



- Incident report completed
- First aid/transport to medical attention
- If medical attention required – Form 8/10 completed and brought to employer within 24 hrs
- Upon receipt of Form 8/10 complete Form 7 – Employers report of injury within 3 days
- Complete Form 6 – Workers report of injury
- Information will be kept confidential as per Policy RE-03 – Functional Abilities Information for RTW
- Compare functional info with essential job requirements (e.g. job description) as per Policy RE-18 Hierarchy of Return to Work
- If unable to identify work in pre-injury position consider other work that may be available within organization
- If no functional info available contact WorkplaceNL
- Re-employment obligation as per Policy RE-05 and section 89.1 of the Act
- Maintain communication with employee
- Advise WorkplaceNL of any issues/disputes that may arise during course of ESRTW as per section 89 of the Act