

# Quick facts:

## Facts for return-to-work programs

### Documentation

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.

Developing policies and/or procedures is important to ensure that the return-to-work program is managed with consistency and accountability on a day-to-day basis. Policies provide written confirmation of the position that the organization will take on return-to-work issues. Procedures provide written guidance on the steps to be followed on return-to-work issues. Policies and/or procedures must identify the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of those involved in the return-to-work process. They must also reflect any legislative requirements that may apply to the organization regarding return to work.

#### What policies and/or procedures are required?

The policies and/or procedures will vary depending on the needs of the workplace. Large, multi-site employers may need different procedures than a single-site, seasonal workplace. Unionized workplaces may have different policies and/or procedures from non-unionized workplaces.

Through the joint mechanism for consultation, it is recommended that the employer conduct a needs analysis for policies and/or procedures that will help in the return-to-work process. This will determine what policies and/or procedures are required for that workplace.

One exception is the return-to-work commitment policy, which is a requirement of PRIME.

#### Who should develop the policies and/or procedures?

The policies and/or procedures must be developed in joint consultation between management and worker representatives of the organization through the joint mechanism for consultation. This will allow for more credibility and buy-in from all staff when they are implemented.

#### How often should the policies and/or procedures be reviewed?

Policies and/or procedures should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they reflect the current circumstances that exist in the organization. Organizations that have undergone major restructuring or change should review all policies and/or procedures to update as required. The return-to-work policy statement must be reviewed annually.



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### How should the employer communicate the policies and/or procedures to staff?

Training sessions to introduce the new policies and/or procedures to staff is usually the most effective way of communicating. Other options can include, but are not limited to, staff meetings, toolbox meetings and orientation meetings. However, if this is not practical or possible, written communication can be an appropriate method of ensuring staff receive the information.

### What are the benefits of developing and implementing policies and/or procedures?

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

- Provides standards for dealing with return-to-work issues.

- Meets requirements for PRIME.
- Creates positive labour relations climate.
- Ensures day to day return-to-work issues are compatible with the organization's mission.
- Outlines the roles and responsibilities of all parties.
- Identifies those who are responsible and accountable for the program.

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

- Ensures all workers are treated fairly and consistently.
- Outlines the organization's commitment to return to work.
- Identifies those who are responsible and accountable for the program.
- Enhances co-operation between the employer and employee.

## Your PRIME Readiness

# CHECKLIST

**Return-to-work policies and procedures are required by all employers with over \$48,000 in average annual base assessments.**

- Does the business/organization have policies and/or procedures that outline the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of the parties involved in the return-to-work program as outlined in its return-to-work policy statement?

#### **Criteria**

- The business/organization must have policies and/or procedures that include guidelines for addressing workplace accommodation issues as required by legislation.
- The business/organization must have policies and/or procedures that include guidelines for addressing return-to-work issues.
- The business/organization must have policies and/or procedures that include guidelines for advising WorkplaceNL of disputes between the workplace parties regarding a return-to-work plan.

### 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