

OHS Program:

10. What is Disability Management?

A disability management program is used by employers to assist workers who are unable to work due to injury or illness. Effective disability management can decrease the economic and human costs of injuries and illnesses. Disability management policies and procedures are important components of an OHS program that assist injured and ill workers to return to work in an early and safe manner.

Requirements

Employers and injured workers are required to co-operate in early and safe return to work and employers are obligated to provide suitable and available employment for injured workers. To increase the effectiveness of a return to work program an employer should maintain a policy in consultation with workers and worker representatives that include:

- The roles and responsibilities of the parties involved in return to work for the employer, injured worker, health care provider(s), co-workers, the Commission and where appropriate, the union and return to work representatives
- Contact with a worker as soon as possible after the injury
- Suitable employment options that injured workers are able to do safely to get them back to pre-injury earnings
- Communication with the worker throughout recovery
- Co-operation of the employer and workers in early and safe return to work
- Confidentiality and protection of personal information
- Information and other duties that may be provided according to WorkplaceNL
- Develop, monitor, evaluate and revise the program in consultation with workers

Tips for effective management:

Effective OHS programs have procedures for implementing a return to work program. Through education, consultation and evaluation an employer can implement an effective return to work program. Effective return to work programs considers:



- Senior officials signing the policy and posting it in a prominent place
- Senior management to promote the program
- Education and training of workers on their responsibilities
- Lists of suitable and meaningful duties for those who develop return to work plans
- Communication protocols
- Reviews of current return to work cases
- Regular reviews of the effectiveness of the disability management program

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