

Ten Easy Steps to Effective Return-to-Work

What is “Return-to-Work”?

“Return-to-Work” is a process designed to help injured workers get back to work quickly and safely.

Why Should My Organization Have a Return-to-Work Strategy?

Employer Benefits

- Controls direct and indirect costs
- Reduces production downtime
- Reduces need to train replacement workers
- Increases morale and improves operations
- Reduces workers’ compensation fraud
- Maintains the skill sets of valuable experienced people

Employee Benefits

- Expedites a speedy recovery
- Supports a sense of self worth
- Allows employee to stay in same or similar job
- Prevents interruption of salary and/or benefits

How Do I Set Up a Return-to-Work Program?

- **Develop a policy for Return-to-Work** that reflects your company’s commitment to assisting injured employees in getting back to work. Include the expectation that all employees will participate.
- Establish a Return-to-Work team **and assign an individual or the RTW team to be responsible for the program. Include both management and labor (union) representation in the planning process and on the team.**
- **Develop functional job descriptions** that describe physical and other job requirements for all positions.
- **Identify opportunities for transitional duty** at your facility. Ask for suggestions from employees. Consider adaptations to existing jobs and reorganization of existing job tasks.
- **Educate all employees, including managers, and medical providers** about your Return-to-Work program. “Sell” Return-to-Work as a benefit to employees.
- **Establish a procedure for early reporting** of any injury or illness.

LOSS CONTROL FELLOWSHIP

- **Send the injured employee for medical treatment right away.** Send a copy of the functional job description to the physician with the injured employee. Arrange for transportation of the employee to the doctor, or provide an escort. Talk to the injured worker to determine if he/she has enough information about workers' compensation, his/her medical condition, and how to speed recovery.
- **Stay in touch with the injured employee.** Maintain communication among all parties (injured worker, employer, medical provider, insurance carrier), keeping everyone updated and informed.
- **Investigate the incident.** Determine possible causes and solutions to prevent similar incidents.
- **Bring the injured employee back to work in an appropriate capacity as soon as possible** (according to medical recommendation). Perform a workstation assessment if necessary to verify job demands and to determine opportunities for modification, such as modifying workstations, restructuring job tasks, providing short-term retraining, providing special adaptive equipment, offering scheduling flexibility, and offering temporary, alternative productive work.

For more information, contact your local Hartford agent or your Hartford Loss Control Consultant. Visit The Hartford's Loss Control web site at <http://www.thehartford.com/corporate/losscontrol/>

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