

PROCEDURE

Rehabilitation and Return to Work

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1 POLICY STATEMENT

The company recognises that there are substantial benefits to be gained from rehabilitation principles and practices and is committed to implementing them at this workplace. We recognise that the Workers Compensation and Rehabilitation Act and Regulation 2003 provide the legislative support for workplace rehabilitation activities.

Experience has shown that workplace rehabilitation assists the healing process and helps restore the worker's normal function sooner. Workplace rehabilitation includes early provision of timely and adequate services, including suitable duties programs, and aims to:

- Maintain injured or ill workers at work; or
- Ensure the worker's earliest possible return to work; or
- Maximise the worker's independent functioning; and
- Provide for durable employment.

This procedure has been developed as a joint worker-management agreement.

The company is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy work environment, but in the event of an injury or an illness, making sure workplace rehabilitation is started as soon as possible in accordance with medical advice;
- Ensuring appropriate suitable duties are made available to injured or ill workers to facilitate their safe and early return to work. These duties must be consistent with the current medical certificate and will be time limited;
- Respecting the confidential nature of medical and rehabilitation information and ensuring there will be both verbal and written confidentiality;
- Ensuring all workers are aware that, in the event of injury or illness, they will be consulted to ensure a structured and safe return to work that will not disadvantage them;
- Complying with legislative obligations with respect to the standard for rehabilitation;
- Adopting a multidisciplinary approach to rehabilitation as required;
- Reviewing this procedure annually to ensure it continues to meet legislative requirements and the needs of all parties.

Workplace rehabilitation procedures have been developed to support this procedure. The procedure defines key terms, describes key roles and outlines steps in the return to work process. A copy of the policy is attached to this procedure.

2 AIM OF THE PROCEDURE

The aim of the company's procedure is to ensure:

- That a culture of acceptance for workplace rehabilitation exists;
- We have a process to support an early safe return of any worker who has an injury/illness;
- The position of the rehabilitation and return to work coordinator is adequately resourced; and

- Adequate storage is provided for rehabilitation files to maintain confidentiality of this information.

3 DEFINITIONS

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation of a worker is a process designed to ensure the worker's earliest possible return to work or to maximise the worker's independent functioning.

Rehabilitation involves the provision of approved services, services provided by a registered person, suitable duties programs or necessary and reasonable aids or equipment to an injured worker.

All Queensland employers must take all reasonable steps to assist or provide their injured workers with rehabilitation for the period for which the worker is entitled to compensation.

Standard for Rehabilitation

The rehabilitation provided to our workers will meet the standard outlined in the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Regulation 2014.

Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator (RRTWC)

The RRTWC is a person who has satisfactorily completed a workplace rehabilitation course approved by Q-COMP.

The RRTWC is the link between the injured worker, treating doctor, management, supervisors, WorkCover Queensland, rehabilitation providers and any other relevant parties.

Suitable Duties Programs

These specially selected duties at the workplace are a means of providing a monitored and graduated return to normal duties. They are:

- Matched to the capabilities of the worker; and
- Time limited and regularly upgraded according to his/her level of recovery and treating medical doctor advice

The following issues must be considered when choosing suitable duties:

- The workers pre-injury duties, age, education, skills and work experience and nature of the incapacity;
- Any restrictions and limitations specified by the treating doctor, who must also document approval for all plans and amendments;
- The duties must be meaningful and have regard for the objectives of the workers rehabilitation;
- The duties will be reviewed on a regular basis and the program progressively upgraded, consistent with the workers recovery.

A copy of each worker's suitable duties program shall be provided to the insurer.

Suitable Duties Programs may be:

- **Fully funded** by WorkCover Queensland. WorkCover Queensland continues to pay ongoing compensation to the worker at the rate they would receive if totally incapacitated; OR
- **Partially funded** by both the employer and WorkCover Queensland. Employer pays the worker at the normal rate for work performed and WorkCover Queensland pays a top up amount.

Refer appendix for an example of a suitable duties program.

4 ROLES

The Role of the Injured Worker

Has the responsibility to:

- To apply for workers compensation;
- To advise their doctor of the availability of workplace rehabilitation;
- To ask their doctor to complete the Work Capabilities Checklist (if required);
- To actively participate in workplace rehabilitation;
- To maintain communication with the employer/rehabilitation and return to work coordinator about relevant issues related to their compensation claim.

Has the right to:

- Workers compensation for work-related injuries accepted by the insurer;
- Choose their own doctor;
- Authorise our rehabilitation and return to work coordinator to contact their doctor for advice on suitable duties;
- Confidential, safe keeping of this personal information;
- Be provided with suitable duties, if practicable;
- Be consulted in the development of a suitable duties plan;
- Union representation if so desired;
- Request a Q-COMP review of certain insurer's decisions with which they do not agree (Act s540);
- Have access to an impartial grievance mechanism, which is accessed in the first instance by raising the grievance with the rehabilitation and return to work coordinator for resolution or escalation.

The Role of the Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator (RRTWC) is to:

Ensure an efficient system exists for immediate reporting of injuries to enable early worker contact regarding rehabilitation, to comply with employer's duty to report injury to the insurer and to ensure confidentiality of information received.

Develop, coordinate and monitor workplace rehabilitation strategies for injured workers, including developing suitable duties plans in consultation with injured workers undertaking rehabilitation.

Educate all workers about the workplace rehabilitation procedure and what to expect when an injury occurs. To educate line managers, supervisors and workers regarding their role and responsibilities for rehabilitation. To ensure education is part of the new staff induction process.

Where possible and on behalf of the employer, to ensure rehabilitation for a worker is coordinated with and understood by line managers, supervisors and co-workers.

Promote this organisations workplace rehabilitation program internally to maintain staff's commitment, and externally, to local doctors so as to build a good working relationship and gain their trust and assistance.

Keep a file for each worker undertaking rehabilitation and to ensure confidentiality of both verbal and written information.

Keep accurate and objective case notes of all communications, actions and decisions, and reasons for actions and decisions and to sign and date each notation.

Rehabilitation and Return to Work Procedure

Ensure currency of the workplace rehabilitation procedure and their own rehabilitation and return to work coordinator accreditation.

Provide injured workers with the opportunity to give feedback on the rehabilitation system and to document this feedback.

The Role of Line Managers/Supervisors/Team Leaders is to:

- Actively assist the rehabilitation and return to work coordinator in identifying and coordinating suitable duties;
- Adjust workplace procedures and rosters to enable successful implementation of the suitable duties plan;
- Monitor the injured worker's progress in relation to suitable duties; and
- Generally offer support and encouragement to any injured worker.

The Role of Co-workers is to:

- Generally offer support and encouragement to injured workers

5 PAYMENT OF WAGES

WorkCover Queensland will determine the liability of a claim, i.e. - accept or reject an application.

The company may pay sick or other accrued leave to a worker whilst the claim is being determined. Upon acceptance of a claim, leave will be reimbursed. If the claim is accepted, WorkCover Queensland will pay weekly benefits to workers directly or The Company may choose to pay worker directly and seek reimbursement from WorkCover Queensland.

For workers participating in a partially funded suitable duties program, The Company will pay the worker at the normal rate for work performed and WorkCover Queensland pays a top up amount.

The company will obtain a partial incapacity form from the WorkCover Queensland case manager and advise of the gross amount paid to the worker at the end of each pay period. WorkCover Queensland will then process a top up payment directly to the worker.

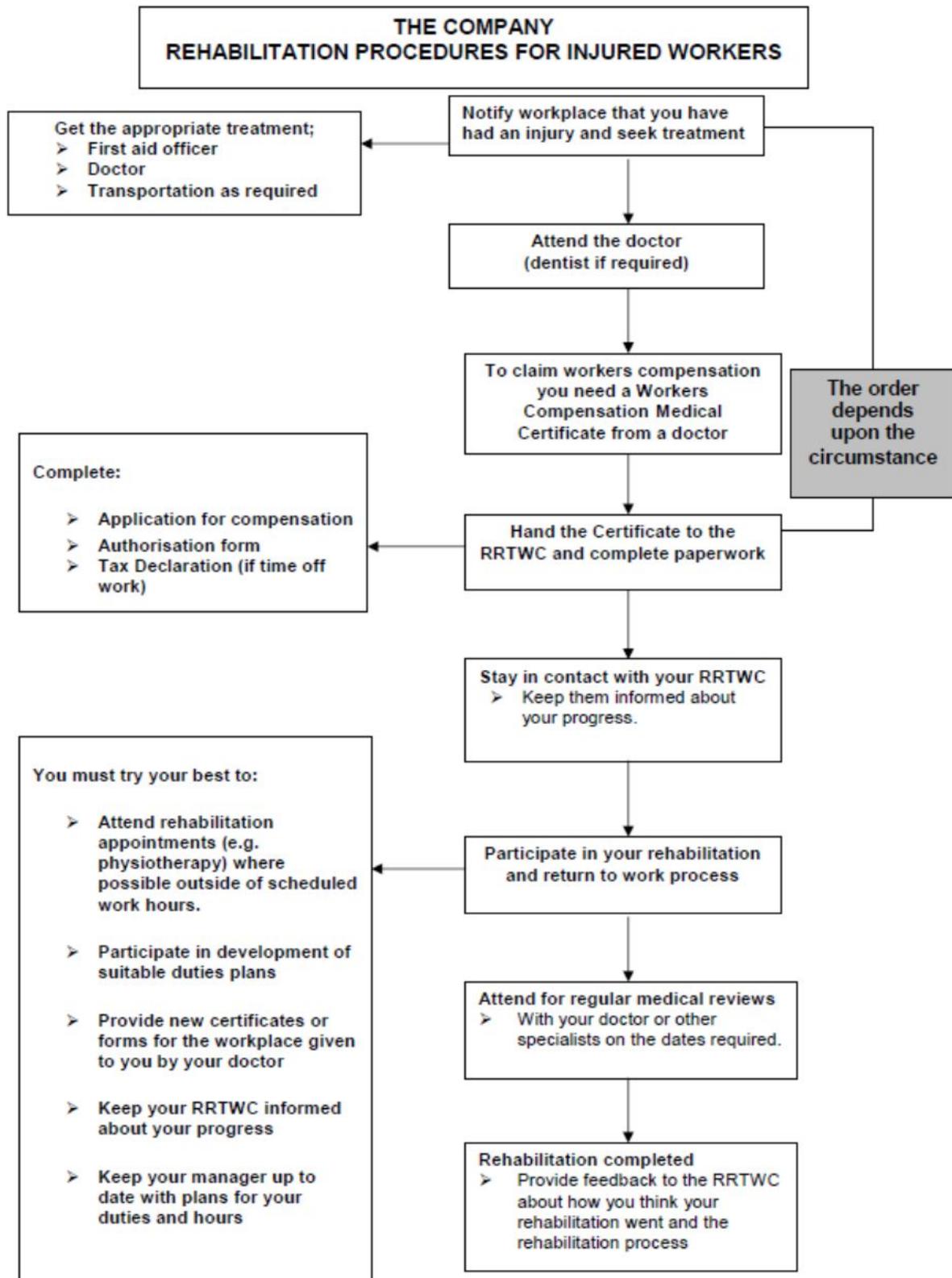
6 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If an injured worker is unhappy with a decision made at the workplace regarding their rehabilitation, they can raise the matter with the RRTWC. If the matter is unresolved they can request the manager review the decision. If they remain unhappy with the decision following internal review they may request that the WorkCover Queensland case manager becomes involved to resolve the dispute.

If either an injured worker or the employer is unhappy with a decision made by WorkCover Queensland, the decision may be reviewable with Q-COMP. Note that strict time frames apply in this case.

Refer to the following pages for Rehabilitation and Return to Work Flowcharts.

ANNEXURE 1 : Rehab for injured workers



ANNEXURE 2: Rehab Procedure for return to work Coordinators

