

Injury Management & Return to Work Policy

For Australian Small & Medium Enterprises

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Important Notice

This template is provided as a general guide only. Workers compensation and return to work requirements vary by state/territory. We recommend reviewing your specific state/territory legislation and consulting with your workers compensation insurer.

1. Purpose

This policy establishes [Company Name]'s commitment to supporting injured workers and facilitating their safe and sustainable return to work. Effective injury management benefits the worker through faster recovery and return to normal activities, and benefits the organisation through reduced costs and retention of skilled employees.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees who sustain a work-related injury or illness
- All managers and supervisors
- The injury management and return to work process

3. Policy Statement

[Company Name] is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy workplace to prevent injuries
- Ensuring injured workers receive prompt medical treatment
- Supporting injured workers during their recovery
- Providing suitable duties to facilitate early return to work
- Maintaining regular communication with injured workers
- Complying with workers compensation legislation
- Treating injured workers with dignity, respect, and confidentiality

4. Benefits of Return to Work

Research shows that early return to safe, suitable work:

- Promotes faster recovery

- Reduces the risk of long-term disability
- Maintains connection with the workplace and colleagues
- Preserves skills and income
- Improves psychological wellbeing

5. Reporting Injuries

5.1 Employee Responsibilities

Employees who are injured at work must:

- Report the injury to their supervisor immediately
- Seek appropriate medical treatment
- Complete a workers compensation claim form if required
- Provide medical certificates and information
- Participate in the return to work process

5.2 Initial Response

Upon notification of an injury, [Company Name] will:

- Ensure the worker receives prompt medical attention
- Complete the incident report
- Notify the workers compensation insurer if required
- Provide the worker with information about the claims process
- Initiate the return to work planning process

6. Medical Treatment

[Company Name] supports injured workers to receive appropriate medical treatment:

- Workers can choose their own treating doctor
- We encourage workers to seek treatment promptly
- We will provide information to treating doctors about the workplace and available duties
- We respect medical advice and recommendations

7. Return to Work Planning

7.1 Early Intervention

Return to work planning begins as soon as practicable after injury. Early intervention includes:

- Contacting the injured worker to offer support
- Understanding the nature of the injury and restrictions
- Identifying suitable duties options
- Developing a return to work plan

7.2 Return to Work Plan

A return to work plan may include:

- Description of duties (suitable duties or pre-injury duties)
- Hours of work
- Work location
- Physical requirements and restrictions
- Review dates
- Goals for progression

Plans are developed in consultation with the worker, treating doctor, and insurer (if applicable).

7.3 Types of Return to Work

- Same job, same duties – no restrictions
- Same job, modified duties – temporary adjustments
- Different job, suitable duties – alternative role during recovery
- Graduated return – building up hours and duties over time

8. Suitable Duties

[Company Name] will endeavour to provide suitable duties that:

- Are meaningful and productive
- Are within the worker's physical and medical restrictions
- Are within the worker's skills or can be learned
- Are at the worker's usual workplace where possible
- Allow for progression as the worker recovers

Suitable duties may include modified tasks, reduced hours, alternative duties, or a combination.

9. Responsibilities

9.1 Injured Worker

- Report the injury promptly
- Seek and follow medical treatment
- Provide medical certificates and information
- Participate actively in return to work planning
- Attend medical appointments and rehabilitation
- Perform suitable duties in good faith
- Communicate any concerns or difficulties

9.2 Supervisor/Manager

- Respond supportively to injury reports
- Complete incident reports
- Maintain contact with the injured worker
- Identify suitable duties in consultation with the RTW Coordinator
- Supervise and support the worker during return to work
- Monitor progress and address issues

9.3 Return to Work Coordinator

- Coordinate the return to work process
- Liaise with the worker, supervisor, doctor, and insurer
- Develop and monitor return to work plans
- Provide information and support
- Maintain records
- Ensure compliance with legislation

9.4 Senior Management

- Ensure policy implementation and resources
- Promote a supportive return to work culture
- Approve suitable duties arrangements
- Review injury management performance

10. Communication

[Company Name] will maintain regular communication with injured workers:

- Contact within 24-48 hours of injury notification
- Regular check-ins during absence
- Updates on return to work planning
- Ongoing support during return to work

Communication will be respectful and focused on recovery and return to work, not blame.

11. Confidentiality and Privacy

Information about injuries and workers compensation claims is confidential:

- Medical information is only shared on a need-to-know basis
- Personal details are protected in accordance with privacy laws
- Colleagues will only be advised of restrictions relevant to work
- Records are stored securely

12. Workers Compensation Claims

12.1 Lodging a Claim

For injuries that require medical treatment or time off work:

- The worker completes a claim form
- [Company Name] completes the employer section
- Claims are lodged with the insurer promptly
- The worker is provided with claim details

12.2 Entitlements

Workers compensation may provide:

- Payment of reasonable medical and rehabilitation expenses
- Weekly payments for lost income (during incapacity)
- Lump sum payments for permanent impairment (if applicable)

Entitlements vary by state/territory and individual circumstances.

13. Rehabilitation

[Company Name] supports rehabilitation services where needed:

- Workplace rehabilitation providers
- Physiotherapy, occupational therapy, or other treatments
- Vocational counselling and retraining
- Ergonomic assessments and equipment

14. Disputes

If there is disagreement about the return to work process:

- Raise concerns with the Return to Work Coordinator
- Seek to resolve issues through discussion
- Contact the workers compensation insurer if needed
- Access dispute resolution services if required

15. Non-Work-Related Injuries

While not covered by workers compensation, [Company Name] will:

- Support employees returning from non-work injuries/illnesses where practicable
- Consider reasonable adjustments
- Maintain communication during absence

The same principles of early return to safe work apply.

16. Record Keeping

[Company Name] will maintain records of:

- Injury reports
- Workers compensation claims
- Return to work plans
- Medical certificates and correspondence
- Progress reviews

Records are retained as required by legislation.

17. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or following significant changes to legislation or workers compensation arrangements.

Employee Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have read and understood [Company Name]'s Injury Management & Return to Work Policy. I understand my responsibilities in the injury reporting and return to work process.

Employee Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____