

RTW: JOB INFORMATION WORKSHEETS (JIWS)

A Job Information Worksheet (JIW) identifies the physical, psychological, sensory and environmental demands on a worker performing his/her essential job functions. They are also commonly known as “PDAs” – Physical Demands Assessments. They quantify the job demands and include descriptive information on the tools, equipment and processes necessary to do a specific job.

JIWs are used in the following ways:

- **By WCB – Case Management**

It is not uncommon for a WCB case manager to request a copy of a JIW. A case manager may use it to assess when a worker has attained the degree of recovery that allows him/her to return to his/her original job. A case manager may also use it to determine if a worker is able to perform some essential job duties in order to assist in RTW initiatives.

- **By Physiotherapists and/or Occupational Therapists**

Commonly a JIW is requested by a physiotherapist or occupational therapist (OT) to assist him/her in developing a patient’s treatment program. Often a physiotherapist or OT can incorporate essential job functions into a work hardening program. A JIW is also useful when a functional abilities assessment is conducted, which, in turn can assist employers in modifying jobs to reflect improvement in a worker’s physical condition as he/she progresses. It can also help a physiotherapist or OT to determine when an injured worker is fit to return to his/her pre-injury job.

- **Hazard Identification**

A JIW is particularly useful in identifying safety hazards inherent in a specific job position, especially ergonomic stressors. A completed JIW “quantifies” the physical demands of a job. For instance, a job may require that a worker has to “lift 20 lbs from the waist to shoulder height 40 times” in the course of one shift. In this case it has identified that this job could be risky for the development of a cumulative trauma disorder/repetitive strain injury and corrective action can be investigated and ergonomic improvements implemented.

It is recommended that an employer have a completed JIW for each position in its organization. Should the WCB, physiotherapist or occupational therapist request a JIW then no delay has occurred in the development of an appropriate treatment program, in the scheduling of appropriate functional abilities assessment tests, in developing a RTW plan, or in certifying the worker is able to return to his/her pre-injury job. Less delay can mean a quicker recovery for the injured worker.

A JIW should be completed with input from both supervisors and workers. This is important in order to achieve an accurate picture of what is required in a job. In some cases, a supervisor may be completing a JIW that reflects a job in the way it was intended to be done but does not reflect how it is actually being done on the floor. Collaboration on JIWs helps to avoid a situation where workers have issues about the accuracy of the result/s.

JIW completion instructions

- A JIW should be filled out for each position in an organization
- A JIW should be representative of typical job demands
- If there are different physical demands in a job position depending upon the season, product line, shift or a project separate JIWs should be completed for each
- JIWs should contain “quantitative measurements”. For instance, “5 times a day”, “20-40 lbs”, “3 times per hour” etc. rather than subjective statements such as “often”, “frequently”, “hardly ever”, “heavy”, etc.
- The actual weight (rather than an approximate) lifted, carried, pushed or pulled should be indicated for any tasks that involve handling weights over 50 lbs.
- If a physical demand is only required under certain circumstances that should be noted on the form; for instance, required to climb stairs – “rarely occurs and only when visiting clients outside the organization”
- Not all categories on the JIW will apply for every job position
- Only fill out the “FOR EMPLOYER & EMPLOYEE USE ONLY” section

Sample JIW completion procedure:

- Supervisors will select one worker from each job position to complete a draft JIW for that job position
- The completed JIW draft will then be circulated to all other workers in that job position for their review and input
- Supervisors will review the JIW draft for accuracy and to ensure it is completed using quantitative measurements
- The final copy of a JIW will be completed based upon worker and supervisor input
- Completed JIWs will be kept on file in Human Resources
- A JIW will be forwarded by Human Resources to the appropriate quarter when a request for a JIW is made (i.e. by the WCB, a physiotherapist, an occupational therapist, a physician, a safety coordinator, RTW coordinator etc.)
- JIWs can be used to assist RTW planning participants in identifying appropriate alternate or modified work, determining when an injured worker is fit to return to his/her pre-injury job and identifying safety hazards within a job position
- JIWs will be regularly reviewed for accuracy - recommended at a minimum once every three years and/or whenever there have been significant changes in a job