

# Monitoring Return-to-Work Plans

Supervisors are crucial to the return-to-work (RTW) process and in the success of individual RTW plans. Supervisors:

- Are familiar with the injured worker and the work performed
- Are able to identify tasks that fit the injured worker's medical restrictions
- Usually direct and monitor the work
- Are often the first person aware of any problems with a RTW plan
- Are the person to whom the worker would bring questions
- Set the tone of their area

## Supervisors need to:

- Have a good understanding of the RTW program (i.e., why it has been introduced, its benefits, etc.)
- Know the RTW processes and procedures
- Know their specific RTW responsibilities
- Fulfill their RTW responsibilities in a timely manner

Supervisors identify suitable work, monitor that work, report problems, work with the injured worker and RTW planning participants to overcome obstacles and follow up with the injured worker throughout the RTW process.

## Ensuring Safety

Involve supervisors in the identification of the alternate or modified work. A key responsibility of any supervisor is to protect the health and well-being of workers. They need to ensure the safety and welfare of all people and property possibly affected by the RTW plan.

## Monitoring RTW plans

Supervisors monitor the injured worker's progress. They:

- Identify concerns and problems with the RTW plan
- Discuss concerns and issues around job performance, safety, etc.
- Show interest in both the alternate or modified work done by the injured worker, as well as the condition of the injured worker
- Communicate any concerns about the RTW plan to the appropriate people
- Make changes to the RTW plan as necessary
- Ensure coworkers support the RTW plan
- Follow up after the injured worker has recovered to ensure that there are no ongoing problems

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## Sample RTW Monitoring Procedures

### Supervisors:

- Ensure that any necessary changes to the work unit required by the RTW plan have been implemented before the injured worker returns to work
- Advise coworkers of the injured worker's return and discuss how the RTW plan may impact them
- Welcome the injured worker
- Meet daily with the injured worker
- Never sanction more or new work duties for the worker without medical authorization
- Go over the RTW plan with the worker and discuss any adjustments made to the work environment, equipment, work organization etc., required by the plan (if applicable)
- Discuss the specific alternate or modified work identified on the RTW plan
- Discuss the specific activities the worker cannot do
- Instruct the worker to bring any problems, issues, concerns etc., with the RTW plan to their attention immediately
- Resolve, if possible, any identified problems or issues at the unit/department level (could require minor adjustments or changes to the RTW plan)
- Immediately inform the RTW coordinator of any unresolved problems
- Document any problems or adjustments made to

the RTW plan

Some workplaces have a form or checklist to assist supervisors in monitoring RTW plans.

If there is a change in the RTW plan, ensure that both the injured worker and supervisor agree to new processes, especially if new duties are assigned. Forward revised copies of the new plan to the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB).

If the amendments to the plan are due to a change in the worker's medical restrictions, the health care provider must forward an updated medical restrictions form to the WCB.

### Confidentiality

Medical restrictions, diagnosis and treatments are confidential information. Supervisors may be privy to this information through their role in RTW plan development directly from an injured worker. Regardless of how a supervisor has learned the information, do not share with others unless the injured worker has given written permission to do so.

Any documentation that includes confidential information must be stored in a secure manner.

Ignoring confidentiality could damage the relationships between the injured worker, coworkers and the supervisor. The employer could also be liable legally.

