Measuring Return-to-Work

Effective Return-to-work (RTW) Programs have measurable objectives to assess and track how they are working. Set goals to be realistic and to prevent false expectations. A RTW Program is about mitigating the impact of a workplace injury to your business and to your employees. It is not about turning every time-loss claim into a no time loss claim.

To set a measurable objective, first set a baseline. There are some statistical reports available from the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) that can help:

Employer Experience Summary - Previous month end – REA16C1

This report covers the previous four years, as well as total claim costs for the current year up to the end of the previous month. It has information on an employer's WCB account including:

- Industry premium rate
- Individual firm's payroll and premium rate
- Surcharge/Merit levies
- Total time loss (TL) and no time loss claims (NTL)
- Total claim costs (broken down into medical, rehabilitation, compensation and pension costs by calendar year)
- Injury frequency rate (IFR) - a WCB calculation that compares the TL frequency rate per 100 full time position equivalencies for a company to itsindustry's TL frequency per 100 full time position equivalencies.

Employer Cost Information – Total Cost per Claim – REA16C3

This report contains details on each accepted WCB claim. Each claim is broken down by:

- Injury type (knee injury, concussion, burned hand, strained back, etc.)

- The individual claim costs (broken down into medical, rehabilitation, compensation and pension costs)
- Total number of time loss days compensated for each claim
- Alternate addresses (where applicable)

Alternate addresses

Companies with more than one location can set up their WCB account with alternate addresses. This means that the WCB can code claims to the company's location where the injury occurred. Then the company can filter/organize the 16C3 report by location to see the claim experience associated with each location.

Please note that an employer with multiple locations must request that its WCB account be set up with alternate addresses. The WCB does not do this automatically. Once the WCB has set up an account in this manner, then the alternate address code assigned to each location must be used when filing the E1. This way the WCB can assign the claim information to the correct location where the injury occurred.

These reports are also useful to occupational health and safety committees (OHCs) and to the OHC coordinators or safety manager. This information can help determine where the most common injuries and most costly injuries are occurring in order to take preventative action.

To set up a WCB account with alternate addresses contact the WCB at 1.800.667.7580, Employer Services Department.

FACT SHEET

Online account

You can obtain the 16C reports, along with other reports and information, via the internet if you have an online account. You can obtain copies of statistics whenever you wish.

The statistics are current up to the end of the previous month.

Sample RTW Program objectives

Once you have established an injury or RTW database and baseline, the next step is to set goals for improvement:

(NAME OF COMPANY's) RTW Program will reduce the average duration of time loss claims from _____ days to _____ days.

(NAME OF COMPANY's) RTW Program will reduce the annual cost of claims (i.e., wage replacement costs) from $_____ to $_____.

(NAME OF COMPANY's) RTW Program will reduce the WCB time loss injury frequency rate from _____ to _____.

The RTW Program will reduce the average duration of time loss claims by _____ percent.

Evaluating Return to work

Measure and evaluate objectives monthly, quarterly or annually. If you are not meeting the objectives, review the program to identify where improvement may be required.

Recommendations for improvement may include, but are not limited to:

- Updating policies and procedures
- Training supervisors in roles and responsibilities for:
  - finding alternate or modified work
  - creating a positive work environment
  - fulfilling reporting procedures in an accepted time frame
  - effective RTW plan monitoring
- Training of workers in RTW responsibilities and the benefits of RTW
- Providing more resources to fulfill RTW duties
- Improving communication and reporting within the organization or with the WCB
- Improving the company's medical restrictions forms
- Expanding RTW work options available in the workplace

Evaluating safety

You can use the statistical data from WCB reports to set safety and injury prevention objectives. You can set objectives to reduce time loss and no time loss claims, and to identify and prevent specific injuries, such as to reduce the number of back injuries, eye injuries, hand injuries, etc. (i.e., by type of injury) or the number of over-exertion injuries, slips and falls, etc. (i.e., by cause of injury).

Your safety association can also work with you to assist in setting up a safety program.

The easiest claim to manage is the one that did not exist in the first place.