

RTW Program Review

Collecting in-depth data important

Collecting return-to-work (RTW) statistical data and analysis of that data is important.

However, a review to determine the true effectiveness of a RTW program needs to go further. Numbers tell one story, but not the whole story. An in-depth approach ensures that RTW processes are working as planned in all areas of the workplace, ensures accuracy of policies or processes, etc. within the current reality of the workplace and makes program improvements.

Conduct RTW reviews on two levels: regular reviews of individual RTW plans and a review of the RTW program as a whole (i.e., defined processes, defined responsibilities, document/form templates, etc.).

As with any other steps in RTW, conduct reviews collaboratively with workers, supervisors and union representatives, where applicable.

RTW Plan Review

Any alternate or modified work assigned to an injured worker must be safe, productive, and within the injured worker's skills and abilities. Do not wait for a formal review of an individual plan to determine that. Monitor the worker's RTW plan and progress closely to ensure the work does not pose

a risk to the injured worker, coworkers, company premises or equipment.

A RTW plan review identifies areas that improve:

- The quantity of RTW job options and tasks available for a specific injured worker
- The quality of RTW job options and tasks available for a specific injured worker (i.e., relates to activities that generally are thought to have a higher value and/or priority attached to their completion)
- The efficiency of reporting procedures between a specific injured worker and those responsible for RTW plan development
- The efficiency of identifying appropriate RTW job options
- The efficiency of resolving any problems or issues

RTW Program Review

Improvements to a specific RTW plan usually correspond to improvements made to the RTW program as a whole. For instance, improvements made to the quantity or quality of alternate or modified work available for a specific RTW plan could suggest that the organization explore a wider range of job options across the organization.

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Program review includes (but is not limited to):

- Investigating whether continual medical information confidentiality is maintained
- Reviewing forms (e.g., medical restrictions form, RTW plan form, RTW plan monitoring checklist, etc.) to ensure they are capturing the required information they were intended to solicit or if additional training or education is necessary for workers, supervisors, union executives, etc.

RTW Program Assessment

Companies can evaluate the RTW program on their own or ask for outside expertise. The WCB offers an in-depth RTW program assessment. A WCB team will visit the site for two days and prepare a report for the employer to use to improve the program.

The WCB's RTW assessment is an objective evaluation of an employer's safety or RTW system, and measures each program element against predetermined, established standards.

This assessment determines where there are gaps between the standards, or best or recommended practices, and an employer's program components and identifies areas for program improvement.

An assessment also can serve as a benchmark against which future program improvements to measure.

The assessment process and audit tool outline specific RTW standards such as RTW documentation, procedures or practices. The tool then awards points for each program component element or sub-category. The assessment uses two different methodologies to verify the RTW standards:

- Documentation (e.g., documents & records)
- Interviews