Return to work

The importance of mutual goals

Returning to work while recovering is a healthy and safe approach for most people with work-related injuries. Working is good for physical and mental health, and often supports the healing process. Making safe, sustainable work arrangements for people who were injured at work takes collaboration and a partnership approach based on the mutual goals of returning a worker to safe, meaningful and medically supported work. Workers, employers, the WCB and health-care providers all have important roles in this partnership.

A return-to-work plan is developed collaboratively as early as possible, taking into consideration the worker's abilities, current job duties and modified work options to prevent further injury.

Supporting workers in returning to work while they recover is good for them and good for business. When workers can do suitable duties while they recover, it keeps them connected to the workplace, it helps restore their dignity and self-worth and can prevent long-lasting disability. Returning to work safely while recovering requires intentional collaboration between all partners in this partnership.

Return to work: mutual goals

The worker, employer, health-care provider and the WCB all share the mutual goal of supporting return to work and minimizing loss associated with a workplace injury. The reasons may differ, but no one in this partnership wants to see an injury get worse and all want to see an optimal recovery from the physical and/or psychological effects of a work injury.

Mutual goals include:

- Preventing further injury.
- Facilitating recovery.
- Maintaining current capabilities/function.
- Restoring function.
- Maintaining connections and relationships in the workplace.
- Retaining skills of experienced workers.
- Maintaining financial stability.

- Preventing compounding psychosocial risk factors that may result from being away from work.
- Reducing burden on co-workers.
- Returning the worker to physical and psychological wellness.