



# RETURN TO WORK

OSBT SP-018-00

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EMPLOYEE EDUCATION 2019

# RETURN TO WORK

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## **Purpose:**

- To provide assistance to employees to return to work following absence due to illness or injury.
- Also referred to as ERTW or early return to work describes an employee or partner who is unable to return to work to his/her regular work assignment until he/she is fully recovered.

## **General Requirements**

- Transitional duty allows workers who are unable to perform their normal job duties because of injury or illness to return to work in temporary modified-duty capacity.
- Transitional duty can also help decrease insurance overhead, hiring and job-training costs, use of nonessential medical treatments, injury rates, frequency of lost time claims, litigation costs, fraud and abuse.

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## **Program Benefits:**

- Lower workers compensation costs
- Decreased employee time away from work
- Reduced turnover
- Strengthened employee relations
- Boosted employee morale
- Improved overall productivity
- Enhanced company image
- Incentive to cross train employees for greater flexibility

## **By allowing workers to return in a temporarily modified role, companies can:**

- Maintain an experienced workforce
- Maintain production, workflow and quality standards
- Stabilize wage and production expenses
- Improve compliance with state and federal employment regulations
- Improve morale and self-esteem
- Accelerate/improve recovery

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## Standard Operating Procedures

- OSBT will implement and train our employees, and partners on the RTW Program as the best practice for reducing worker's compensation costs.
- Successful return to work involves a partnership between employers and employees.
- The employer is likely to be trying to strike the right balance between supporting you and making sure the work gets done.
- As an employee, active participation in the return-to-work program will be critical to its success.
- Good communication with those involved in coordinating return to work is essential.

### **\*\*\*Reference\*\*\***

- *In 2002, OSHA revised the recordkeeping practice to begin tracking cases involving days away from work (regardless of the number of days) as well as restricted or transferred work, placing additional requirement on employers to keep the number of lost-time cases low.*

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## **Responsibilities – HSSE Team**

- Implement the RTW Program
- Manage the changes to the RTW Program
- OSHA Lost Time Reporting Responsibilities

## **Responsibilities – Human Resources**

- Interact with employee and supervisor at every stage of overall process
- Inform injured employee and supervisor of rights and responsibilities under the Workers' Compensation Law
- Maintain documentation and data on status of claims and trends.
- Contact WC Claims Adjuster on each potential or actual lost time injury to inform and discuss transitional duty available
- Upon the recovering employee's return to work:
  - Review the restricted work release
  - Confirm the information needed to assign transitional duty

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## **Responsibilities – Manager/Supervisor**

- While employees may not return to their regular jobs, Managers and Supervisors should actively create light duty early return to work programs such as:
  - Mentor junior employees
  - Provide support and produce goods and services in a limited capacity
- Coordinates the RTW activity:
  - Conducts initial investigation
  - Completes all needed paperwork
  - Informs employees of RTW program guidelines and practices
  - Maintains daily contact with injured worker, and doctor for work restrictions
  - Assists in assigning or developing modified work for employee
  - Identifies and offers modified-duty assignment
  - Monitors recovery through incoming medical work restrictions

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## **Responsibilities - Employees**

- In many cases, employees returned for shorter shifts, allowing for physical reconditioning as they gradually returned to full capacity.

## **Responsibilities - Injured Employees**

- Report injury immediately to supervisor
- Complete all needed paperwork as soon as possible
- Follow RTW guidelines and practices
- Initiate daily contact with employer
- Provide regular updates on health condition, medical status and restrictions issued
- Return to modified duty that is within medical restrictions as set by the doctor

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## Responsibilities - Partners

- Report injury immediately to OSBT
- Complete all needed paperwork as soon as possible
- Follow OSBT RTW guidelines and practices
- Maintain contact with OSBT
- Provides regular updates on health condition, medical status and restrictions issued
- Returns to modified duty that is within medical restrictions as set by the doctor



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## Keeping in Contact

- It is imperative that an injured employee stay in touch with their employer!
- Work together to resolve any issues around sick leave, it can help you to feel less isolated.
- Keeping in contact can also help make returning to work less difficult. There are many options for keeping in touch, including:
  - Email
  - Call
  - Text
  - Attending work social events
  - Coming in for a cup of tea or coffee



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## Discussing your Return to Work

- Talk to your supervisor, HR, or the person(s) responsible for coordinating return to work and raise any concerns you might have.
  - The discussion will probably need to cover:
    - What your tasks and responsibilities will be
    - Any work activities that may trigger stress and what helps to reduce or manage this
    - The effects of any medications you are taking and how these might impact on your work
    - How much they can disclose to work colleagues
    - Barriers to a safe and early return to work
    - Any specific needs you have (e.g. time off to attend appointments, inability to do the job in the same way as before becoming unwell)

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## **Liaising with your Healthcare Professional**

- Have a discussion with your healthcare professional about how to approach your return to work and manage your health problem in the workplace
- Discuss any adjustments to your work that may be needed on a temporary or permanent basis
- If you are taking medication, discuss how any side effects may affect your work



# Thank You!

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Thank you for completing Return To Work!  
Complete the [Return To Work quiz](#) to receive credit for this module.

Have questions?

Contact [HSSE@osbt.com](mailto:HSSE@osbt.com)