

Safe Return to Work Policy	Policy Number: PA-410
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Purpose: Return to Work (RTW) is a process that occurs when a worker suffers an injury or illness to help them return to work as soon as safely and medically possible. The process can occur at the same time as medical and rehabilitation treatment to improve the worker's overall recovery.

Policy Statement: Pinnguaq commits to preventing workplace injuries and illnesses through maintaining a safe and healthy work environment. In the event an employee suffers an injury or illness, Pinnguaq commits to taking all reasonable steps to provide safe and timely return to work (RTW), by providing alternative or modified work through the return to work program.

Pinnguaq will work in collaboration with workers to identify suitable work and develop individualized RTW or modified work plans based upon functional abilities information provided from health care providers and the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC). The RTW process commences immediately after an injury or illness occurs.

Scope: This policy applies to all employees who are unable to perform their regular work as a result of injury or illness. All employees must fully cooperate in the safe and timely return to work of injured and ill workers.

Definitions:

Return to Work (RTW) Program: A RTW program helps injured workers return to suitable work as soon as medically possible. It outlines what steps to take when a worker is injured and how to create and implement individualized RTW plans.

Return to Work Plan: A RTW plan is an individualized plan for the injured worker that considers their functional limitations, rehabilitation or treatment plan, and the availability of suitable work. The plan assists them in either remaining at work or returning to work as soon as medically and safely as possible.

Duty to Accommodate: fundamental legal obligation under the Human Rights Act. In the employment context it usually takes the form of accommodating workers with disabilities (injuries and illnesses).

Suitable work:

- Is within worker's functional abilities;
- Is safe and does not put the worker or co-workers at risk nor hinder recovery;
- Is meaningful and promotes healthy recovery. It serves a purpose or valuable function to the organization; and
- Is equal to pre-injury earnings, where possible.

Accommodation: an adaptation or change to the job to meet the injured worker's functional abilities.

Alternate Work: job duties a worker does not normally perform.

Undue Hardship: the limit beyond which employers can no longer accommodate a worker's return to work. This can happen when the employer cannot sustain the economic or efficiency costs of the accommodation. Determining undue hardship depends on the individual circumstances and takes into account health, safety, and financial considerations.

Responsibilities:

Injured Worker:

1. Contact employer as soon as possible after the injury happens;
2. Complete and submit to WSCC Claims Services a Worker's Report of Injury form;
3. Provide employer with regular updates on functional abilities throughout recovery;
4. Participate in prescribed treatment and rehabilitation programs;
5. Assist employer to identify suitable and available work, consistent with functional abilities and, where possible, restores pre-injury earnings;
6. Inform health care provider of available suitable work;
7. Accept suitable work when identified;
8. Provide the WSCC with information on RTW plan;
9. Work within the identified limitations or restrictions;
10. Work with the employer and the WSCC to address any concerns that may arise.

Employers Responsibilities:

1. Contact worker as soon as possible after the injury happens;
2. Complete and submit an Employer's Report of Injury form within three days of incident;
3. Submit written or oral report to the WSCC Chief Safety Officer within 24hrs for serious injuries, or immediately if injury results in death;
4. Communicate with the worker, and the WSCC throughout the recovery period;
5. Maintain communication log and documentation;
6. In collaboration with your worker identify and provide suitable work consistent with worker's functional abilities and, where possible, restores worker's pre-injury earnings;
7. Provide the WSCC with a copy of your worker's RTW plan;
8. Supervise and monitor the RTW plan;
9. Submit the hours worked at least every two weeks to the WSCC;
10. Work with the worker, the WSCC, and the union (if applicable) to address any concerns that may arise; and
11. Provide Employee Assistance Program (EAP) information (if applicable).

Procedures:

Step 1: Get Medical Attention

1. The Worker will receive first aid from an employee with first aid training, and emergency services will be called in necessary situations.
2. If needed, the employer must provide the worker transportation to a healthcare facility, and back to work or residence as appropriate.
3. The Health care provider fully completes and submits the First Medical Report form. Request that the health care provider gives a copy of the worker's Functional Abilities form to your worker. The Employer or a representative from the Joint Health and Safety Committee will remind the Worker to request this form.

Step 2: Report the Injury

1. The worker will report the injury by completing an Incident Report Form, and submit it to a member of the Joint Health and Safety Committee as soon as possible. If the Worker is unable to file an Incident Report an employee who witnessed the accident or injury will be asked to complete one until the Worker is able to do so.
2. The Employer will ensure they are fulfilling any legal obligations, including reporting the injury to the Ministry of Labour.

3. The Worker will complete and submit to WSCC Claims Services Worker's Report of Injury form by contacting the WSCC. Within three days worker fully completes and submits Worker's Report of Injury form.
4. Within three days, the human resource manager will complete and submit to WSCC Claims Services the Employer's Report of Injury form and will provide a copy to the worker. The Employer will review the report before submitting. A copy will be maintained for the organization's own records.
5. Worker provides the employer with a copy of the Functional Abilities form from the health care provider by submitting it to the Human Resource Manager.

Step 3: Communicate and Collaborate

1. The Executive Director will communicate with the worker as soon as possible after the injury, either by phone, Slack, or email.
2. If the worker can't return to work immediately, the Executive Director and worker will have regular scheduled communication throughout the absence from work (at least bi-weekly or as agreed to). The Executive Director will document communications in communications log and provide a copy to the Human Resource Manager.
3. The Human Resource Manager will contact the WSCC regularly (bi-weekly) to provide updates on worker prognosis and modified work options and will document communications.
4. The Human Resource Manager will provide the WSCC with the job demands analysis or job description for the worker's job or possible suitable work.

Step 4: Identify Suitable Work and Create Worker's RTW Plan

1. The Human Resource Manager, the worker's supervisor, and the Executive Director will review functional abilities, job demands analysis, and transferable skills to identify suitable work options. Functional abilities will be evaluated using either the WSIB or WSCC Functional Abilities Form.
2. The Human Resource Manager, the worker's supervisor, and the Executive Director will meet with the worker to discuss goals, timelines, and suitable work.
3. The Human Resource Manager will discuss the functional abilities, suitable work goals, and timelines with the WSCC, and specify the suitable work.
4. The Human Resource Manager will document the RTW plan and ensure the executive director and worker sign it.
5. The Human Resource Manager will submit the RTW plan to the WSCC.

Step 5: Implement and Monitor

1. If the worker requires a different tool, equipment, or other work design changes, the Human Resource Manager will discuss this with the WSCC and purchase and implement them.
2. Worker returns to work and starts suitable work. The Human Resource Manager will notify the Finance Department.
3. Worker and Human Resource Manager meet regularly (initially daily, then weekly at a minimum) to discuss and evaluate RTW plan.
4. Health care providers monitor and evaluate the worker's recovery and rehabilitation. The employer may request updated functional abilities information from the WSCC, or the worker may provide Functional Abilities forms following their appointments.
5. The worker should report any concerns immediately to human resource manager. Adjustments will be made to the RTW plan according to the recovery process and operations. The human resource manager will submit any updates to the plan to the WSCC.
6. The human resource manager will report progress, hours worked, and concerns to the WSCC at least bi-weekly.

Step 6: Return to Work Completion

1. Worker fully recovers, completes their RTW plan, and returns to pre-injury job.
2. If the worker requires permanent restrictions due to the injury. In this case, the executive director should discuss with the WSCC. The employer needs to assess and, if possible, provide long-term or permanent accommodations.

Step 7: Evaluate

1. Evaluate the RTW plan and overall process: what went well, what didn't, assess how participants overcame challenges, and make recommendations for improving future plans and the overall RTW program.

Benefit Coverage:

Employees who are unable to return to work due to a critical illness or injury will receive benefit coverage for 24 months. Employee benefit coverage will be terminated after 24 months if the employee is unable to resume employment, which would otherwise result in undue hardship to the organization.