

Return-to-Work Planning Meetings (RTWPM)

A return-to-work planning meeting is a method to help employers, workers and claim owners in developing a return to work plan that ensures the worker returns to work safely, gradually and in a timely fashion. These meetings are a collaborative effort to assist with early, safe, and sustainable return to work.

What is the purpose of a RTWPM?

- To identify suitable modified work options and develop a specific Return to Work (RTW) plan for the injured worker and your business needs.
- To create a progressive RTW plan designed to promote recovery and assist with a return to full duties.
- To discuss and address the specific barriers for the injured worker, taking into account your business needs and structure.

Why do I need to participate?

RTWPMs have been proven to successfully assist in the return of injured workers back to work. Face to face meetings allow employers to reconnect with their employees and develop individualized RTW plans.

What are the benefits?

- Expedite the RTW process and reduce time loss claim costs, which in turn can impact your premiums.
- Assist workers to upgrade work duties and improve productivity.
- Provide workplace education regarding injury prevention and avoiding re-aggravation of the worker's injury
- Address concerns regarding RTW.
- Assist with the progression of your worker to pre-accident status.
- Assist you (through medical professionals) in identifying appropriate modified duty options and ensuring that they are physically suitable for your worker.

As an Employer, how can I improve the RTWPM process?

1. Complete a Physical Demands Analysis
2. Create a Modified Duty Job Bank.
3. Categorize duties into sedentary, light, medium and heavy level tasks (See table on page 2).

Additional resources for Modified Work can be found at:

http://www.wcb.ab.ca/employers/mod_work.asp

<http://www.wcb.ab.ca/employers/forms.asp>

Task Level Guidelines

Sedentary	Light	Medium	Heavy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifting 10 lbs maximum • Occasional lifting/ carrying • Primarily sitting, with occasional walking/ standing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifting 20 lbs maximum • Frequent lifting/ carrying up to 10 lbs • May require walking/standing to a significant degree • May involve sitting with pushing and pulling of arm and/or leg controls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifting 50 lbs maximum • Frequent lifting/ carrying up to 20 lbs • May involve sitting with pushing and pulling of arm and/or leg controls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifting 100 lbs maximum • Frequent lifting/ carrying up to 50lbs

Reference: The Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations

When should I expect a RTWPM referral?

- The worker is off work.
- Difficulty identifying modified duties for worker.
- Worker is performing modified duties, but no plan to progress to full duties.
- RTW issues have been voiced by worker or employer.

Can I have a RTWPM discussion over the phone?

A phone discussion can be scheduled if:

- Employer has suitable modified duties and there are no apparent concerns about RTW.

OR

- Employer is not able to schedule a timely RTWPM due to extensive travel or limited availability.

Frequently Asked Questions:

We have already exhausted modified duties options; we just don't have anything for the worker. How is this cost effective?

The staff at return to work centres are experts in this area and will assist you in developing alternate options. Once all return to work options (including modified hours) are exhausted then the treatment team can create a comprehensive plan based on your business needs to get the worker back to work. Claims costs continue to increase until a return to work or fitness for work determination can be made.

We have an extensive modified duties program and PDAs for our positions, why do we need this service?

In order to achieve a successful and sustainable return to work, we need to address the individual person's skills, abilities and unique circumstances as opposed to the generic position. This collaborative and comprehensive approach with the employer, worker and service provider assists in achieving a successful return to work.

Someone was just on site for another worker, why do I have to do this twice?

Every scenario is unique and must be reviewed to determine the best approach to achieve a successful return to work. This service is customized to address individual circumstances in order to achieve a successful outcome.

What is the cost of the RTWPM to claim?

The price for a comprehensive RTWPM is \$560.00, and the telephone discussion meeting is \$100. The goal of this meeting is to collaborate with all stakeholders to best assess a return to work plan.

EXAMPLE: A worker who makes \$15.00 per hour and 40 hours per week has a daily compensation rate of approximately \$84.30. (As a result of the return to work planning meeting the worker returns to work 7 days earlier than the cost of the return to work planning meeting has paid for itself.)

What is the cost of not doing it?

WCB's focus on return to work involves supporting workers in a safe return to work through:

- case plans that set clear goals
- effective disability management programs including modified work.

As an employer, you offer valuable insight into return to work options that are available. This focus on getting injured workers back to work as safely and as soon as possible assists you in minimizing the financial costs of the claim, maintaining the worker's knowledge and skill within your organization, and addressing the human costs by keeping the worker tied to the workplace.