



WR&C ACT 1986
INJURY MANAGEMENT PRACTICE NOTE
FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR

REHABILITATION

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To ensure a consistent approach is applied within the public sector to the assessment of and provision of rehabilitation and related services to an injured worker under sections 26 and 28 of the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act, 1986 ('the Act').

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The public sector is committed to a vision of zero harm and 100% return to work for all public sector employees who are injured at work. The 'Safety and Wellbeing in the Public Sector 2010-2015' strategy outlines Government's commitment to its employees in the area of occupational health, safety and injury management.
- 2.2 To meet its injury management commitment, Government recognises that early, safe and sustainable return to work is a key imperative. Public sector agencies are required to have a dynamic and responsive early intervention program to ensure, amongst other things, that injured workers who require time off work or have problems performing their normal duties, can:
- 2.2.1 Have their rehabilitation needs promptly assessed and commenced where necessary;
 - 2.2.2 Are provided with meaningful and appropriate suitable duties in accordance with their medical capacity, to assist their recovery from injury; and
 - 2.2.3 There is an ongoing identification and review of an injured employee's skills and attributes with their established capacity for work, to ensure appropriate suitable employment is provided.
- 2.3 Public sector agencies may offer rehabilitation assistance to employees with non work-related disabilities and may also instigate rehabilitation assistance to work injured employees prior to the determination of their claim.
- 2.4 Rehabilitation programs developed in accordance with section 26 of the Act and/or return to work plans developed in accordance with section 28 of the Act, should be established in consultation with the injured worker and involve the injured worker's manager/supervisor, their treating medical practitioner and other interested parties, as required.
- 2.5 Rehabilitation assistance may extend to vocational rehabilitation, training, job placement and any other assistance as necessary to return the worker to gainful employment.

3. PRACTICE

- 3.1 It is recommended that:
- 3.1.1 Public sector agencies make contact with an injured worker as a matter of priority in order to gather as much information as possible so that an appropriate return to work plan can be developed that:
 - o Reflects the injured worker's medical restrictions; and
 - o Incorporates any specific requirements of the injured worker and the workplace.
 - 3.1.2 The rehabilitation program and/or return to work plan developed, include the return to work goal(s), the strategies for achieving the goal(s) and the responsibilities and obligations of the various parties.

- 3.1.3 Obligations imposed on an injured worker are clearly explained, including their rights of review or the internal dispute management process they should follow if there is a concern regarding the provision or non-provision of rehabilitation.
- 3.1.4 Each agency detail how its rehabilitation activities are performed and the services are provided within its own operational policies and procedures.
- 3.1.5 To support managers and supervisors fulfil the return to work requirements of their role, agencies will have in place appropriate training and a trained Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator (RRTWC), as required by section 28D of the Act.
- 3.1.6 Public sector agencies review the effectiveness of its rehabilitation activities through activities that may include a review of rehabilitation activity on individual claims, feedback from injured workers who have received rehabilitation assistance, workers compensation claim reviews and/or internal or external audits performed and any management reporting conducted.

Should you have any questions in relation to this advice please direct your enquiry to Public Sector Workforce Relations (Workers Compensation Performance), Department of the Premier and Cabinet (phone 822 62683).

Issued by Public Sector Workforce Relations: June 2014