

SAPS Injury Management Practice Note

Early Assessment and Intervention

Objectives, Targets & Performance Indicators

Objective	Target	Performance Indicator
Claims must be assessed for return to work services within 48 hours of notification.	All SAPS agencies	Length of time between date employer is notified of the injury and date of initial assessment on SIMS.
Claims assessed as requiring return to work assistance are provided with appropriate services within 5 days of assessment.	All SAPS agencies	Length of time between assessment and contact by the Return to Work Consultant/Provider with the injured worker and their manager.

Purpose

To ensure SAPS agencies meet their obligations in providing early and targeted intervention in the event of accidents, incidents or injuries involving its employees, by conducting initial assessments and facilitating retention at work or early and sustainable return to work through the provision of appropriate recovery and return to work services.

Context

Return to Work Act (2014)

The Return to Work Act 2014 (RTW Act) has introduced the concept of early intervention into the legislative framework, as follows:

- (1) The object of this Part is to establish a system that seeks to ensure that a worker who suffers a work injury—
 - (a) achieves the best practicable levels of physical and mental recovery; and
 - (b) returns to the worker's pre-injury work or, if that is not reasonably practicable, is in any event restored to the workforce and the community in a timely, safe and durable way.
- (2) Without limiting subsection (1), the aim is—
 - (a) to intervene and provide services under this Part as early as is reasonably practicable after a worker suffers a work injury;

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Recovery/return to work services may do one or more of the following: (a) provide for the physical, mental or vocational assessment of a worker; (b) provide advisory services to a worker, members of the family of a worker, an employer and others; (c) assist a worker in retaining, seeking or obtaining employment; (d) assist in the training or retraining of a worker; (e) assist a worker to find or establish appropriate accommodation; (f) provide equipment, facilities and services to assist a worker to cope with any injury at home or in the workplace; (g) provide assistance to a person who may be in a position to help a worker to overcome or cope with an injury; (h) provide necessary and reasonable costs (including costs of travel, accommodation and child care) incurred by a worker in order to receive or participate in any services; (i) provide anything else that may assist in achieving the objects of this Part.	Section 24(a) – (i)
Action to determine the most appropriate recovery/return to work services to be provided to an injured worker must be taken as early as possible after the worker suffers the work injury.	Section 24 (3)
The agency must take reasonable steps to ensure that a reasonable level of recovery/return to work services are provided to an injured worker taking into account the nature and extent of the worker’s injury, the circumstances of the worker, and any other relevant factor.	Section 24(4)
Early intervention, recovery and return to work services may apply to a worker even if it has not been finally established that the worker’s injury is a work injury.	Section 23(3)

Building Safety Excellence in the Public Sector

Target 6: Early Return to Work Assessment

Early notification and assessment to determine whether return to work assistance is required is a critical success factor in early, safe and durable return to work.

SAPS Practice

Initial Return to Work Assessment, including SIMS recording

An agency will have a documented system in place, which requires supervisors / managers to notify the Injury Management Unit of a worker’s injury as soon as possible, where a return to work assessment should be made within 2 business days of the initial notification (to the supervisor / manager), to determine whether recovery and return to work services are necessary.

All new claims must have a return to work assessment recorded on SIMS once the claim is received and entered.

As notification of the injury and the assessment may occur prior to a claim being received, agencies will have a system in place to document this information so that when the claim is received and entered onto SIMS this information is entered correctly.

Return to Work Services, including SIMS recording

Agencies will have a documented system in place for the provision of appropriate recovery and return to work services for all claims assessed as requiring return to work assistance, regardless of the claim determination status.

An agency's system will allow for the consideration of the most appropriate recovery/return to work services to be provided to an injured worker, taking into account the nature and extent of the worker's injury, the circumstances of the worker, and any other relevant factors.

Where a worker is, or is likely to be, incapacitated for work by a work injury for more than 4 weeks, an agency will ensure that a Recovery/Return to Work Plan (R/RTW Plan), which documents any recovery and return to work services, is prepared for the worker and documented in SIMS.

Refer to Injury Management Practice Note - Recovery / Return to Work Plans for R/RTW Plan requirements.