

METALS MANUFACTURING

RETURN-TO-WORK PROCESS

MACHINING

WELDING

FABRICATION

ASSEMBLY

CNA's Practical Guide to Cost Containment



CNA

The primary purpose of a return-to-work (RTW) program is to return eligible employees back to the workforce as soon as medically appropriate. This guide walks you through the four basic parts of the RTW process. Incorporating these steps can provide your company with an opportunity for improved productivity, increased employee morale and increased bottom-line profit.

An easy way to begin a RTW process is to start with a few activities in the first two steps. As your program evolves, you can add more activities until you have a complete program in place. Success can be measured as easily as one, two, three, four!

4 STEPS TO RETURN TO WORK SUCCESS

1

COMMUNICATION

- Report Claim to CNA within 24 hours
- Perform Accident Investigation
- Contact Injured Person and Family

2

POST INJURY

- Preferred Medical Provider
- Rehabilitation Agreement
- Job Function Evaluation
- RTW Job Bank

3

COST CONTAINMENT

- Medical Cost Containment
- Occupational Rehabilitation Program
- Modified Duty Work
- Transitional Work
- Disability Management Process

4

RETURNED WORKER

- Vocational Case Management
- Maximizing Work Capacity
- Productive Worker

Introduction

The rising costs of work-related injuries are reaching a crisis level for manufacturers nationwide. Increasing workers' compensation and healthcare costs have contributed heavily to the upward swing of company expenses and the need to return employees back to work after an injury. Additionally, businesses are faced with lost productivity and replacement costs, resulting in lost time and money.

We understand that it is unrealistic to be able to return 100% of injured workers back to work. The goal of a return-to-work (RTW) program is to return most of the people back to work, most of the time. That percent will vary between jobs, plants and individuals.

It is important to consider how injuries will affect your employees. Changes in lifestyle, income, overall family dynamics and individual self-esteem can be dramatic.

All of these variables have prompted businesses to identify alternative solutions to assist the injured employee in returning to work. A major alternative is the establishment of a RTW program that encompasses the following components:

- Being dedicated to early intervention when the injury occurs
- Placing injured employees in jobs that not only contribute to the profitability of the company, but help make the worker productive as well
- Securing management, employee, medical and insurance company commitment
- Creating a work environment that keeps employees committed and productive

A successful RTW effort depends upon company commitment to its greatest asset — its employees. In turn, this will cultivate employee commitment to the company and enable workers to be productive contributors to the company's growth and profitability. Implementing an early RTW initiative has the potential to:

- Reduce the number of individuals who cannot temporarily or permanently return to work in their prior position but have a stated desire and ability to return to some work capacity
- Control the work-related injury costs and reduce the frequency of injuries by being aware of a worker's tasks

Regardless of the controls put in place, it is inevitable that some work-related injuries will occur. When this happens, there will be a need for advanced planning case management and alternate productive work to improve the handling of initial and subsequent injuries.

Accidents Cost More Than You Think

Indirect costs may be five times more than the direct costs an insurance company incurs. Figure 1 on the next page lists some indirect costs and, even though those costs may be invisible, they can adversely affect a manufacturer's profit.

To see how much money your company can save by returning employees back to work sooner, review CNA's *Transitional Work Savings Calculator* located at www.cna.com/returntowork. In addition to the cost savings shown by the calculator, you may also want to consider additional cost saving factors that a company incurs, such as additional medical costs for unnecessary medical appointments.

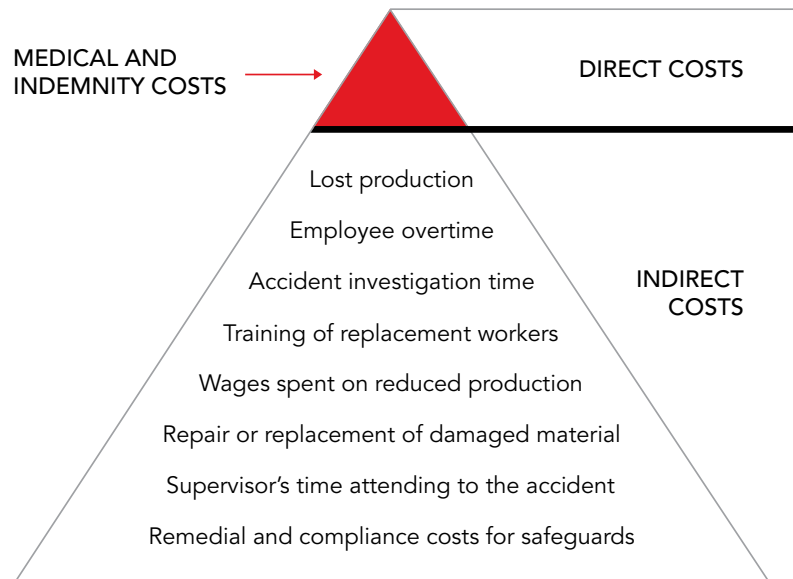


Figure 1: Accident Costs

A RTW process is a series of steps an employer can take. Not every step has to be done or can be done; however, each step can return a cost savings. Start by adapting one, two or three steps to see the benefits of cost savings. If your results are positive, you may decide to engage in additional steps.

The calculator also shows you the estimated amount of additional sales needed to cover the indirect costs of an injury. Those costs can be better controlled when a CNA Cost Containment Program is part of your business plan. Learn more about this program on the following page.



To see how much money your company can save by returning injured employees to work sooner, visit CNA's *Transitional Work Savings Calculator* at www.cna.com/returntowork. Users can select a specific type of injury and view the estimated cost savings of returning that employee back to work sooner. The calculator illustrates your company's potential workers' compensation savings through the implementation of a transitional work program.

TAKING PART IN THE TRANSITIONAL WORK PROGRAM, EMPLOYEES ARE LIKELY TO:

- Lose less income
- Get back to their regular job sooner
- Stay connected with co-workers

CNA's Cost Containment Process — What Makes the Return-to-Work Initiative Successful

CNA's Cost Containment Process is a group of procedures used by employers and medical professionals to help injured employees return to work quickly and healthfully.

Management can make a commitment to a RTW program by putting a company plan in place that indicates how to deal with each initial injury.

A. Administrative Planning Considerations

1. To start the process, it may be helpful to identify a cost containment team. This team could consist of the following members:

- Management
- Supervisor (area, department, division)
- Physician (selected or treating physician)
- Employer's workers' compensation coordinator
- Claim specialist/case management professional from the insurance carrier

The process should also include:

- Documentation to be completed when an injury occurs
- Resources to assist in the early RTW effort, such as temporary work tasks that could be used for alternate/modified duty, and equipment and personnel that could provide temporary assistance
- A list of outside medical care sources (if permissible by statute)

2. The cost containment team should establish critical team responsibilities that include:

- Accident investigation and reporting (co-workers, area supervisor, safety team members and division/plant manager could serve as key members in this role)
- Injured employee contact (the area supervisor, workers' compensation coordinator, human resources employee, risk manager or nurse could serve as key members in this role)

- Alternate work duty identification (co-workers or the area division/plant manager could serve as key members in this role)
- Claim handler contact (the workers' compensation coordinator could serve in this role)
- Physician follow-through (the workers' compensation coordinator, claim handler/adjuster or case manager could serve in this role)

3. Your company should communicate to workers that you care about their safety, both personally and professionally. That helps to create and reinforce a positive attitude. It also promotes workforce interest in a successful early RTW effort.

4. Recognize the benefits that a RTW initiative offers for your company. A RTW effort:

- Provides stability in your workforce with minimal impact on productivity
- Allows the company an opportunity to gain control over reported work injuries and subsequent lost time
- Offers additional communication within your company regarding such topics as exercise programs, workstation analysis and injury prevention
- Establishes a method through which the company and the union or non-union workforce can mutually work together for the betterment of all workers

5. Recognize the benefits that a RTW effort will offer your employees. Your staff will benefit by:

- Knowing that they have a job to come back to
- Knowing how they can find qualified medical providers and what to expect during the injury management process
- Gaining a sense of control over the RTW process
- Knowing that their company takes an active interest in their safety and health

6. Conduct a job function evaluation (JFE) for those positions identified as alternate/modified duty to gather data on critical job factors that can be shared with the medical provider and CNA.

The analysis starts with a summary of the entire job process that is broken down into smaller steps. Use the *Job Function Evaluation Guide* to help you complete a detailed *Job Function Evaluation Form* for each position. The *Guide* and the *Form* are included at the back of this guide.

Visit www.cna.com/returntowork to view and download additional RTW materials.

B. Medical Planning Considerations

1. The selection of a physician or outside medical provider (such as a physicians group/private clinic, hospital affiliated clinic or private practice having expertise in industrial injuries) is an important step.

Specifically, the physician(s) should have an occupational medicine background (academically and clinically) and a demonstrated ability to be both realistic and fair. The treating physician can have a great deal of control over the length of the disability.

When the injured worker is not released on a timely basis, it could be because the physician may not understand the objectives of the RTW effort or does not understand how a specific job is being modified to accommodate the employee's temporary work restrictions.

Clear and thorough communication is essential for the treating physician to understand the specifics of a given case.

2. The effectiveness of a RTW initiative starts with the management of the initial injury by the company supervisory and management personnel, company medical personnel (company physician, nurse, etc.) or outside medical personnel (contracted physician, clinics, etc.).

If the worker's initial injury is managed in an uncaring fashion, the worker may develop a negative attitude towards the RTW effort. If the worker is managed in a timely and caring fashion, the worker is more likely to perceive the RTW effort with a positive attitude. That can increase the odds of a successful RTW effort because the worker will develop a positive impression that his/her health is of primary importance.

3. You can identify an appropriate outside medical treatment source by working with CNA Claim and/or local, state or national medical resources, such as the American Medical Association.

CNA's Preferred Medical Providers Program

You can also identify a provider through CNA's Preferred Provider Program. CNA has established relationships with preferred medical providers in all 50 states that can work with your company to provide quality, cost-effective medical care. If an injury occurs, these providers will work with your injured employee to help him/her remain on the job or return to work as soon as medically appropriate.

To research providers, visit www.cna.com/claim, in the "Find a Network Provider" section.

If you have questions or need assistance in locating a preferred medical provider or creating a panel contact, call CNA's preferred provider panel coordinator.

Contact a CNA coordinator by calling 714-674-5786, or send an e-mail request to PPOPanelRequest@cna.com.

4. Establishing relations with outside medical providers can be accomplished by:
 1. Interviewing staff at these facilities
 2. Obtaining references from companies that have used the provider for medical services
 3. Verifying medical credentials with local, state and national organizations, such as the American Medical Association
 4. Documenting this information on the *Occupational Medical Facilities Checklist*, which is included in the back of this guide

Visit www.cna.com/returntowork to view and download additional RTW materials.

Implementation and Promotion of a Return-to-Work Effort

It is important that a worker receives full attention from appropriate medical professionals (occupational medical physician, physical/occupational therapists, etc.) and has access to all necessary medical services (X-ray, physical/occupational evaluation, physician evaluation, MRI, etc.).

5. Teamwork is critical during the initial cost containment effort. A team format is a collaboration between industry, insurance and medicine. Communication, RTW goals and proper reimbursement are maximized when all concerned agree on philosophy, process and goals.

The medical team is a critical component to a RTW effort and involves professionals, such as occupational and physical therapists, nurses and physicians who have dealt with work-related injuries.

The company personnel (such as the company's nurse, physician, safety member, etc.) and insurance personnel (such as the claim adjuster, rehabilitation representative, etc.) are of equal importance. These personnel can provide valuable job and insurance-related information.



The purpose of a RTW effort is to return the injured employee back to the job as soon as medically appropriate. The implementation and promotion of an effective RTW effort involves identifying realistic RTW options by examining the following information.

1. The Workforce

An employer should be familiar with his/her workforce in terms of:

1. Physical abilities
2. Types of physical skills required to perform various work tasks
3. Satisfaction with benefits and pay scale
4. Interest in working as a team member or independently
5. Ways an employee's co-workers influence his or her attitude about work
6. The overall educational level of the workforce. That is especially important when job cross-training is involved.

Use the RTW Job Bank

In order to assist our clients, risk control consultants, claim team and treating medical providers, CNA provides a Return-to-Work Job Bank. You can utilize the Job Bank for generic job descriptions that can help identify job duties and physical demands of each position.

Refer to the Job Bank example for a Punch Press Operator. The written job description explains the physical demands of the job. That helps the treating medical provider understand the injured employee's job activities. Additionally, these forms can be modified to match your company's requirements.

To access the Job Bank visit www.cna.com/returntowork.

If you need further assistance, call 866-262-0540 or send an e-mail to riskcontrolwebinfo@cna.com. A CNA representative will contact you and address your situation.

2. Your Management Resources

If available, an experienced ergonomist or safety professional should be asked to evaluate work tasks. Work task evaluations should address:

1. The postural demands of each job (i.e., whether or not the worker has to maintain an awkward or fatiguing position to perform the work)
2. The available seating and its design and appropriateness
3. The presence of rest periods after performing heavy work continuously or sustaining awkward positions

Make other jobs available that are within a worker's physical abilities and skill level that do not require extensive training or significant salary/benefit/seniority reductions.

3. Identifying RTW Options

The identification of RTW options can be done by having a supervisor in each work area identify tasks that could be completed by the injured worker. The supervisor should thoroughly evaluate the job by reviewing the physical demands, environment, hazards and protective equipment. The *Job Function Evaluation Guide* and *Job Function Evaluation Form* can help the supervisor evaluate the position. Both forms are located at the back of this guide.

Options to consider are:

1. RTW old position — The position is without modifications in the same department.
2. RTW old position — The position includes modifications but is in the same department. Modifications can be related to work station redesign or work schedule.
3. RTW new position — The position is within the same trade in the same department and the same company. An example could involve a welder performing semi-automated types of welding activities within the welding department or the same company.

4. RTW new position — The position is a new trade in the same department and the same company. An example could involve a welder performing material handling in the tool bin area of the welding department of the same company.
5. RTW new position — The position is a new trade in a different department within the same company. An example could involve a welder performing soldering work in the soldering area of the same company.
6. RTW new position — The position is a new trade in a different department within the same company and requires retraining. An example could involve a welder who stays with the same company through short-term outside retraining to perform metal supply ordering/buying.
7. Permanent, part-time position — This allows workers to gradually recondition themselves and return to their prior work. Depending upon the company, part-time schedules can range from 20 - 32 hours per week. That should be for a specified time period.
8. Temporary part-time positions — These positions allow workers to gradually recondition themselves and return to their prior work.

These transitional/temporary positions should be limited to four to six weeks. In some states, statutes may reclassify a transitional/temporary job as a new "permanent" job if it extends too long.
 - Seasonal work (i.e., budgeted positions that are exclusively used for seasonal increases in business)
 - Special contractual work (i.e., budgeted positions that are used for special projects)
 - Composition of miscellaneous tasks to provide temporary work, such as contractual services that involve janitorial or maintenance work
 - Work between departments as a "float" to provide assistance in areas that are short of personnel

9. Other alternatives that can be utilized for a specified time period include:

- Creation of part-time permanent or temporary positions that a worker can perform at the main facility or at an alternative facility
- Return to old (prior) position on a trial basis under medical supervision
- Return to old (prior) position on a part-time basis with an established process to increase work hours over a specific period

4. Worker and Workforce Commitment

It is important to communicate your company's philosophy regarding alternate duty/modified duty work. Depending on the company, that may require:

1. A physician or outside medical provider with an occupational medicine background who has proven expertise in working with the employer, the employee or the insurance company.
2. A physician who is also willing to meet with plant management, tour the jobs on a regular basis, and understand the needs of the company and its employees.
3. Education of workers on the steps taken to assist them with returning to work safely and readily. Assurance that the worker understands his/her responsibilities toward the RTW process.
4. Designation of a committee of management, supervisors and employees to:
 - Continuously discuss the company's philosophy
 - Review various types of alternate/modified duty work that are regularly or occasionally available

Communicating the company's philosophy on an ongoing basis will aid in workforce acceptance by providing an avenue for mutual involvement. Also, it will provide management an opportunity to continuously re-emphasize positive attitude and commitment towards the RTW effort.

5. Claims Involvement

CNA Claim personnel are skilled at managing workers' compensation claims. The claim team investigates the facts of a worksite injury to help determine whether accidents are work related. CNA works with you, the medical provider and the employee to ensure that employees return to work as soon as medically appropriate. The claim department's responsibilities also include medical and disability management. Your Workers' Compensation Claim Representative will provide you with information about the substantial cost savings that are possible by using preferred providers and other medical cost containment tools and can also recommend skilled medical and vocational rehabilitation specialists.

It is important that you work closely with CNA Claim management. Active follow-through by your cost containment team members can help facilitate bringing the claim to resolution.

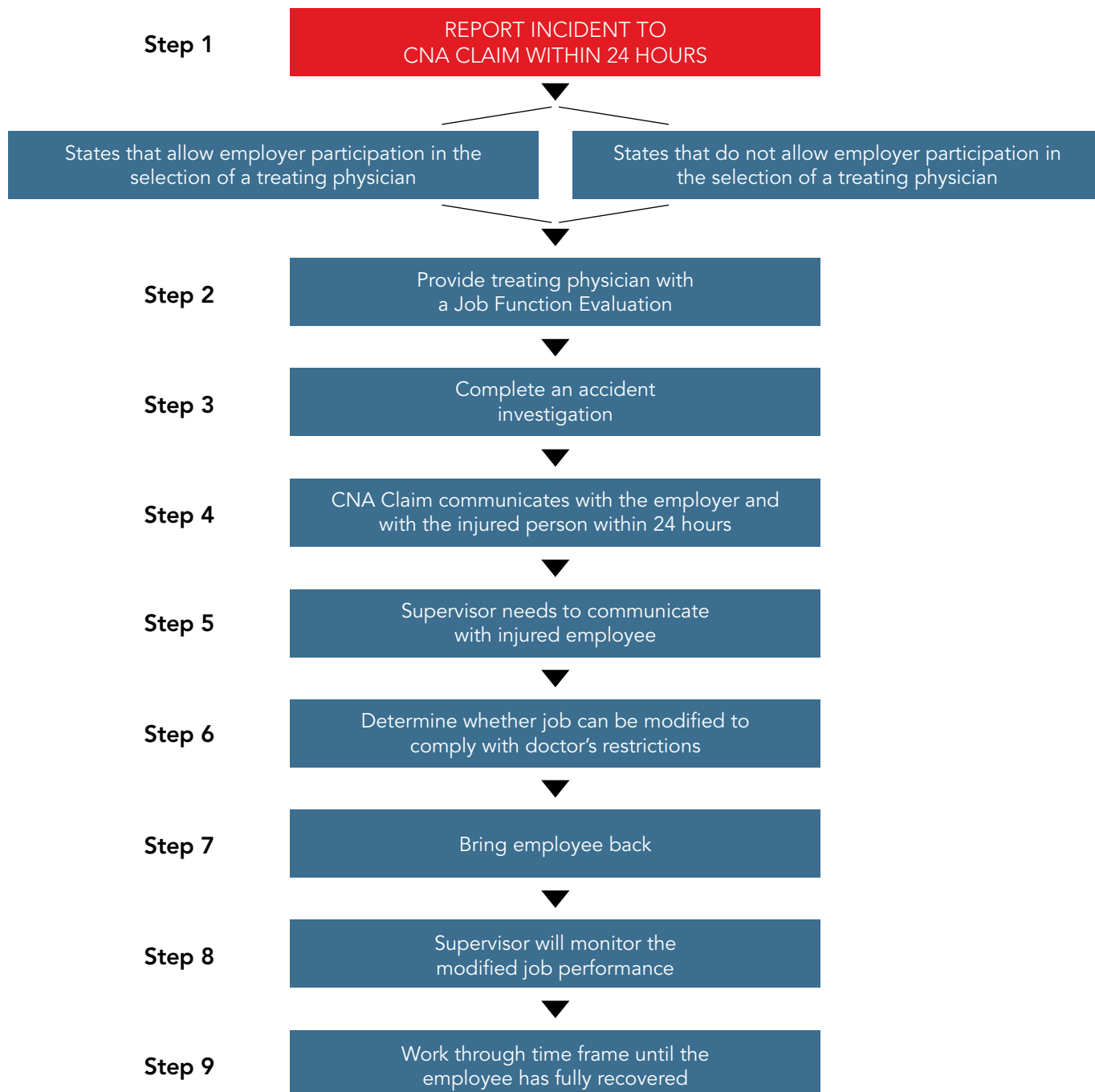
When an employee has reported an injury or illness that requires immediate medical attention, utilize the *Team Coordinator's Information Form*. That form will assist you with organizing contact names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

Setting manageable goals is an important part of your recovery and can help with a successful return to work.

Review the "**9 Steps to RTW Recovery**" illustration on the next page.

9 Steps to Return-to-Work Recovery

There are several important steps to take when reporting a claim. The following chart details the appropriate steps to follow after a claim occurs. Communication between the company, the injured worker and CNA Claim will help resolve your claim quickly and return your employee to work as soon as medically appropriate.



When Injury or Illness Occurs

If an employee is hurt or becomes ill on the job, the following steps should be taken:

1. Take the employee for appropriate medical care. If an in-house medical treatment process is unavailable, the employee should be evaluated by an outside medical provider.
2. Notify CNA as soon as possible to report a workers' compensation injury.

Need to Report a Claim?

Available 24/7, call

877-CNA-ASAP (262-2727)

or report online at

www.cna.com/claim.



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3. A job function analysis/job description for the employee's work should accompany the employee or be made readily available by the employer.

Whenever possible, the employee should also be given information about the pharmacy or provider networks available in the area. That will provide the outside medical provider with specific work information and aid in returning the employee to work. Access CNA's Preferred Provider Network at **www.cna.com/returntowork**.

4. If the employee refuses the company's medical provider, find out the following information:
 - Name of the employee's physician
 - First scheduled appointment, so contact can be made to discuss evaluation results
 - Treatment recommendations (if any) and lost time involved (if any)
 - Employee's current work demands and options for modified work tasks (if needed)
 - Length of treatment

5. Contact CNA's Workers' Compensation Claim Department immediately if you have questions on the severity of an injury or illness.
6. Complete and submit an "Employer's First Report of Injury or Illness" form to the CNA Workers' Compensation Claim Department within 24 hours of injury notice. Same day reporting is best. If your loss is severe, CNA recommends you phone in your loss to ensure it receives the immediate attention it needs.

Call toll-free at 877-262-2727. You also have the option to fill out a workers' compensation loss report at **www.cna.com/claim**.

7. Investigate how the injury occurred by interviewing the supervisor and the employee, without challenging either party.
8. Secure evidence associated with the injury/illness to prevent further impairment from occurring. Contact the CNA Workers' Compensation Claim Department for further guidance in handling the evidence.
9. Make sure all employees understand their benefits, especially disability benefits.
10. Establish alternate/modified duty work for the employee with the company medical provider, an outside medical provider or the employee's physician of choice. The company should provide a job description that highlights the physical demands, work duties and work task frequencies of the new/modified job.
11. Establish procedures to handle catastrophic injuries. The plan should identify specific company personnel capable of working with family members in this situation.
12. Identify resources to help the employees and their family members.
13. Take necessary steps to avoid another incident.
14. Use the *After Injury Telephone Log* to keep track of all correspondence with the injured worker's medical provider.

When an Employee Cannot Return to Work Immediately

If an employee cannot return to work, contact the employee within 24 hours of the injury. CNA recommends using the *After Injury Telephone Log* to document information obtained from the employee. That log is located at the back of this guide.

Visit www.cna.com/returntowork to view and download additional RTW materials.

Follow the steps below if your employee cannot return to work following an injury:

1. Contact the employee on a consistent basis (preferably weekly, following the initial contact).

Ensure regular company contact with the physician and insurance company representative (i.e., Workers' Compensation Claim Representative) to gain their input and status of the claim. Preferably, this should occur every two to four weeks. Active, ongoing communication will help to facilitate information to allow for improved case management.

2. When the employee does return to work with a release, previously identified company personnel should meet with the employee before he/she reports to his/her regular/modified work area.
3. A review of work tasks (regular or modified), physical restrictions (if any) and any other employee-employer concerns should be discussed.
4. If the employee continues to visit a physician on a regular basis following his/her return to work, the employer should continue to discuss the outcome of those visits with the physician.
5. Recognize the danger signals of extended disability for a relatively minor injury. Warning signs include:
 - Extended healing time. Is the worker getting worse rather than better?
 - Is there any suspicion of chemical dependency?
 - Is the physician uncooperative? Is the physician not responding to your questions and is the employee given seemingly unlimited time off?

Given any of these signs, use your company's cost containment team to brainstorm possible solutions. Also, consider drawing upon other resources within your company, such as Industrial Relations and Human Resources.

Obstacles

Potential obstacles to address when establishing a RTW effort include:

- **The skill level of the treating physician**
Does the physician have the academic and clinical expertise in handling RTW issues?
- **Modified/alternate work duties**
The individual must have the work skill, aptitude and attitude to succeed in the position.
- **Communication of the work description**
The RTW description should be specific and emphasize the employee's physical abilities. Clear communication of physical abilities will allow the supervisor to select assignments properly.
- **Economics**
Does the alternate/modified duty work task place the employee in a lesser earning capacity?

Summary

The guiding principle of a successful RTW effort will be based on the company's attitude about its employees.

That may be called a company's value statement, human resources strategy or its philosophy. It is the starting point for designing and implementing a strong RTW effort.

A RTW effort will be most successful when the company views its employees as a valuable resource, as an investment and as an appreciating asset. Within this context, any disability interfering with the employee's productivity becomes a matter of moral, legal and financial concern requiring prompt and continuing attention.

It is not easy to initiate this type of process but, as with everything else, it gets easier as you practice. With workers' compensation rates increasing, it is critical to your company that you minimize these expenses.

Attached Materials

The following materials and forms are enclosed in this kit to help you get started. Please go to www.cna.com/returntowork to download these materials.

Refer to the *Return-to-Work Program Tool Kit*, which explains how to use each form.

Your kit contains these guides and forms:

1. Transitional Work Savings Calculator
2. Job Function Evaluation Guide
3. Job Function Evaluation Form
4. Occupational Medical Facilities Checklist
5. Return-to-Work Job Bank Example/Punch Press Operator
6. Team Coordinator's Information Sheet
7. After Injury Telephone Log
8. Program Tool Kit

Additional Resources

When you have an opportunity to use CNA's *Transitional Work Savings Calculator*, go to www.cna.com/returntowork and view the link to the online calculator. Select an injury type from the drop down menu and answer the other three input questions. The calculator will estimate how much a transitional work program may be able to save your company on a case-by-case basis.

The following materials and forms are also available online and may be downloaded.

1. Attending Physician's Report
2. Cost Savings When Reporting an Occupational Injury Quickly
3. Implementation Progress Questionnaire
4. Return-To-Work Self Audit Review

Definitions

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal law that gives civil rights protection to individuals with disabilities.

Essential Job Functions (duties)

An employee's essential job functions are identified as those duties required to accomplish the purpose of the job for which the employee was hired. Essential job functions are identified in the position's job description.

Industrial Injury or Illness

Workers' compensation injury or illness claimed to have occurred during the course of the eligible employee's employment, i.e., a non-fatal work-related injury or illness.

Primary Treating Physician (PTP)

For an employee with industrial injuries or illnesses, the PTP directs the employee's work restrictions. For an employee with non-industrial injuries or illnesses, the physician directing the work restrictions must be either the employee's primary treating physician of record, the physician of specialty treating the employee's specific injury or illness, or other medical practitioner approved under the employee's health plan. Note: Some states, such as California, have an established procedure that licenses medical providers.

Return-to-Work (RTW)

This is the phrase used in relation to an injured or ill employee who has reached substantial medical improvement to be able to return to his/her position with either no workplace modifications or restrictions, or with permanent workplace modifications or restrictions that are not essential to the job function for which the employee was hired.

Job Sharing

Denotes two or more employees sharing the hours and responsibilities of one job position.

Modified Duty Work

Temporary changes to the employee's essential job duties, which allow that person to perform in that position. The changes may include, but are not limited to, changing the work station or tools, removing tasks the employee cannot presently perform, reducing the time spent on a specific job task(s), or eliminating specific job duties within the employee's regular job to meet the temporary work restrictions.

Transitional Work

Transitional work allows an employee with temporary restrictions to work in a modified, alternate or reduced-hours capacity for a defined period while recuperating from an illness or injury.

Special note: Work diagnosis would be performed by an ergonomist or a case manager who has the ability to evaluate whether the job can be modified or altered to meet the treating physician's restrictions.

Alternative Work

Temporary work that consists of duties for which the injured/ill employee was not hired but is capable of performing and meet the physician's instructions for work restrictions. Alternate work may also include assignment to a different work unit.

Permanent Restrictions

If the employee's primary treating physician has placed permanent work restrictions, then the employee's supervisor and human relations department, the CNA Workers' Compensation Claims Specialist, and the CNA Case Management Director will work with the employee to determine an appropriate course of action.

All employment actions will be based upon essential job functions of the position and the employee's eligibility for other benefits at that time, which includes, but is not limited to, accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and retirement.



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For more information, contact:



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