



WCB-Alberta

Disability Management Self Assessment

WCB-Alberta

Disability Management Self Assessment

Completing the Disability Management Self Assessment helps you:

- **improve your overall injury management process.**
- **identify shortcomings in meeting legislated requirements.**
- **identify gaps in managing return to work.**

Employer responsibilities

Under the *Workers' Compensation Act* employers have a number of responsibilities when a work-related injury/illness occurs. These responsibilities include: recording, reporting and worker entitlement and return to work issues. Effective management of return to work minimizes the impact of the injury/illness.

Did you know...

Early reporting results in faster entitlement decisions and benefit payments to your workers.

This allows workers to focus on recovery and safe return to work.

Managing a successful return-to-work program helps you reduce claim costs and **lower your WCB premiums.**

Use the checklist to determine if you are meeting all of your responsibilities.

Checklist

Recording

Do you:

- Keep a record of all work-related injuries/illnesses reported to you?
- Record the right details?
- Keep records confidential and for three years minimum?
- Give the worker a copy of the record?

Explanation

You must keep a record of all work-related injuries/illnesses that are reported to you by your workers. The details you must record are:

- full name.
- date and time of injury/illness.
- date and time reported to you.
- where it occurred.
- cause and description of injury/illness.
- description of first aid, if provided.

In respect of worker privacy, employers must maintain confidentiality of records. Records may no longer be open to general viewing, such as being left in first aid kits or at first aid stations, unless access is limited.¹

Use individual record forms, and have someone responsible to maintain the records for at least three years and control access to them.

¹ Access to accident records is limited to the injured worker, those providing medical treatment, worksite inspectors, accident investigators, those evaluating health and safety programs and statistics, and WCB.

Reporting

Do you:

- Submit a WCB Employer Report of Injury on all reportable accidents within 72 hours of becoming aware of them?
- Provide an accurate disability status (time loss, modified duties, fatalities, and no time loss) and complete and accurate earnings information on the Employer Report of Injury?
- Notify WCB within 24 hours of a worker's return to work?
- Notify WCB of any change in a worker's status that may affect his/her entitlement under the Act?
- Give the worker a copy of the report?

Reportable accidents are those that result in:

- lost time or the need to temporarily or permanently modify work beyond the date of accident.
- death or permanent disability (such as amputation, hearing loss, etc.).
- a disabling or potentially disabling disease or condition caused by occupational exposure or activity (such as poisoning, infection, respiratory disease, dermatitis, etc.).
- the need for medical treatment beyond first aid (such as assessment by physician, physiotherapy, chiropractic, etc.).
- the worker incurring medical aid expenses (such as dental treatment, eyeglass repair or replacement, prescription medications, etc.).

A change in status that may affect entitlement includes:

- a change in a worker's ability to perform work resulting in time loss or the need to modify work duties.
- a change in hours of work or rate of pay while on modified work.
- unpaid time loss following return to work to attend medical treatments/appointments.

Worker entitlement

Do you:

- Pay workers their full wages for the date of accident and not deduct them from sick pay?
- Provide for and pay the cost of transportation to initial medical treatment?
- Tell workers to submit all medical aid expenses including prescriptions to WCB?
- Not reduce sick pay or other benefits due an worker when compensation on assignment is paid by WCB?
- Not enter into agreement with workers to waive or forego WCB benefits, or discourage or impede workers from reporting an accident to WCB, or knowingly provide false or misleading information to WCB?
- In making modified work available, provide work that is necessary to your operations and keeps the worker active in the workplace?
- Continue to provide employment health benefits as of the date of accident?
- In cases where you do not continue employment health benefits for workers who are unable to work due to a work-related injury or illness, provide WCB with a copy of the worker's employment health benefit plan that was in place on the date of accident?

You are required to pay workers the full wages they would have received for the date of accident had they not been injured and cannot deduct those wages from their sick pay or other entitlement.

Employers are responsible to provide and pay for the cost of transportation to initial medical treatment.

WCB is responsible for all medical aid for work-related injuries/illnesses. Medical aid includes dental, vision and prescription coverage that often is submitted to the employer's health benefit plan carrier.

Employers cannot reduce a worker's sick pay or other benefits when wage loss benefits are paid to the employer by WCB.

An employer cannot discourage or impede a worker from reporting an accident to WCB, or knowingly provide false or misleading information to WCB in connection with a claim, or enter into any agreement to waive or forego WCB benefits.

Agreements include:

- paying a worker for time loss resulting from a work-related injury or illness instead of reporting it to WCB; or
- altering work schedules or taking vacation/sick time to cover time loss for a work-related injury/illness.

If you provide modified work to expedite return to work it must be meaningful and productive work that is part of your operations and performed at the employer's premises or other appropriate location for the work being performed.

You must continue a worker's employment health benefits as of the date of accident with no change to the employer's contribution or level of coverage.

You must continue to pay the employment health benefits of workers while they are unfit to perform their full pre-injury level of employment for up to one year* following the date of accident. If a worker was contributing towards employment health benefits before being injured, you must ensure there is a process to allow the worker to continue making payments as of the date of accident.

* If the worker voluntarily ends their employment relationship during the coverage period, he or she may no longer be entitled to continued employer paid health benefits past the last day of employment.

Checklist

Managing return to work

Do you:

- Offer modified work to expedite return to work?
- Obtain medical clearance for return to work?
- Pay workers their pre-accident rate of pay while on modified work?
- Ensure workers return to meaningful and productive modified duties once they are medically fit?
- Ensure the worker's date of accident position or comparable position of equal pay is available once they are medically able to perform the essential duties of the position?
- Ensure workers are not laid off or terminated as a result of their injury?

Explanation

Managing return to work benefits you and your injured worker.

If your worker is terminated within six months of returning to work, WCB will presume you terminated the worker as a result of their injury. If your worker is terminated after six months of returning to work, WCB may investigate if you terminated the worker as a result of their injury, unless you can provide evidence to show otherwise.

Offering modified work in keeping with the medical work restrictions enables workers to safely return to work at the earliest opportunity and may reduce claim costs.

Obtaining medical clearance for return to modified or regular work helps ensure workers are physically able to perform the work and not aggravate their injury.

Paying workers their pre-accident rate of pay while on modified work keeps claim costs down and allows workers to focus on recovery and return to full duties.

If a worker has been employed for at least 12 continuous months on a full-time or regular part-time basis, an employer is legally obligated to return the worker to meaningful and productive modified duties once they are medically fit following an injury. Regardless of the length of employment, it remains a best practice to return the worker to meaningful and productive modified duties once they are medically fit.

You must offer to reinstate the worker in their date of accident position or comparable position of equal pay, once they are medically and physically able to perform the essential duties of the position.

Did you know...

By reporting accidents electronically you have access to medical reports submitted online and will be advised immediately of your worker's fitness for work. Sign up at my.wcb.ab.ca/ess/signup.

You will also be able to access your company and industry statistics, maintain your account, get clearance certificates, submit your annual return and pay your WCB premium.

Managing return to work

Do you:

- Have someone assigned to coordinate and monitor return-to-work planning?
- Give workers an information package post-accident?
- Utilize the OIS clinics?
- Use a written offer of modified work and send a copy to WCB?
- Maintain an inventory of physical demands analyses?

Having someone responsible to coordinate return-to-work planning with the worker, health care providers and WCB helps ensure workers return to work when safe to do so.

An information package should include:

- details of what is expected of the worker during the return to work process.
- a fitness for work form which includes a medical assessment form with medical release.
- a description of available modified work duties.
- a physical demands analysis of worker's regular duties.

Consider using an Occupational Injury Service (OIS) that provides timely and appropriate medical care and disability management services specifically for work-related injuries.

Using a written offer of modified work ensures mutual understanding by all parties. The offer should stipulate:

- the modified duties assigned
- start date
- hours of work
- rate of pay
- worker's acceptance/refusal
- who is responsible to monitor the worker's progress

Maintain an inventory of physical demands analyses (PDAs). This allows treating healthcare professionals to determine fitness for work based on accurate information.

Where to find...

- **Injury record** - open.alberta.ca/publications/fa009-first-aid-records
 - **Occupational Injury Service information** - [www.wcb.ab.ca/insurance-and-premiums/lower-your-premiums/occupational-injury-service-\(ois\).html](http://www.wcb.ab.ca/insurance-and-premiums/lower-your-premiums/occupational-injury-service-(ois).html)
 - **Notice to injured employee**
 - **Fitness for work form with notice to health care provider and release authorization**
 - **Offer of modified work**
 - **Physical demands analysis**
- } www.wcb.ab.ca/resources/for-employers/forms-and-guides/index.html
- **Hurt at Work? (1,2,3) poster** - www.wcb.ab.ca/assets/pdfs/employers/123_english.pdf
 - **WCB seminars** - www.wcb.ab.ca/resources/for-employers/seminars-and-workshops/
 - **myWCB** - my.wcb.ab.ca/ess/signin

Any questions?

Phone: 780-498-4754
Fax: 780-498-7872

Toll free: 1-866-922-9221
Email: claims_audit@wcb.ab.ca

