

## Workers' Compensation Information for Supervisors

# Prevention/Return to Work

**P**revention is the key to providing a safe work environment. Preventing workplace injuries and illness is the responsibility of everyone at the workplace. When injuries and illness occur, however, it is important for the supervisor and injured worker to focus on getting the employee back to **safe and productive work** as soon as medically possible. Coordinated education and assistance is available to supervisors and injured employees on how to effectively incorporate an injured employee into the workplace.

### Accidents can occur even in the safest workplace, but what can be done to help prevent future workplace injuries?

- Management commitment/assignment of responsibilities
- Safety communications system with employees
- Accident investigation
- Procedures for correcting unsafe/unhealthy conditions
- Safety and health training and instruction

### What are the benefits of returning your employee to work in a timely manner?

#### Employee Benefits:

- Less disruption to normal routine
- Controlled environment prevents re-injury
- Preserves leave time which may have been used to supplement
- Positive influence on peers during recuperation
- Realizes value to the organization
- Focuses on abilities instead of disability
- Productive uses of abilities promotes self-esteem

#### Supervisor/Management Benefits:

- Prevents secondary disability
- Retaining a trained and knowledgeable employee



- Displaying a commitment to the wellbeing of the workplace
- Saves money spent on hiring temporaries
- Promotes positive employee morale in the workplace

- Utilize recovery period to maintain productivity
- Illustrates value of employee to the work place
- Promotes employee return to work force
- Promotes cross-training
- Minimizes potential for relationship
- Lower medical costs
- Decrease costs for lost work days
- Maximizing productivity will promote positive feedback
- Minimizes case management
- Promotes communication vs. litigation
- Maximizes communication with injured employee
- Minimizes short- and long-term disability cases
- Promotes compliance with ADA View as addition to employee benefits package

## What can you do as an employer to accommodate an employee with restrictions?

- Workstation modification
- Job redesign
- Flexible schedule
- Building modifications

Studies have shown that injured workers recover faster if they continue to work in some capacity instead of sitting at home. Remember: Focus on what the employee **can do** rather than those tasks he or she **cannot** perform. By effectively incorporating injured employees into the workplace you increase their likelihood of a quick and complete recovering AND you control the cost of the injury. Its a win/win.

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This material is provided as general information and is not a substitute for legal or other professional advice.

## What can you do to stay involved while your employee is out on a work related injury?

- Maintain ongoing communication with injured workers who are at home, showing genuine concern.
- Set aside time to discuss the Patient Status Reports when the employee brings them in.
- Stress return to work as an employee benefit.

