

Return to Work Services Roles: Information for Workers & Employers

OVERVIEW

Returning to work and life activities can help a person's recovery from an injury or illness and reduce the chances of a longer-term absence from the workforce. The WSIB calls this the "Better at Work" principle, based on best practice research for successful return to work (RTW) outcomes. Currently, the WSIB helps about 92 per cent of injured workers return to work with no wage loss within 12 months of injury.

A successful return to work is best achieved when the employer and worker actively work together to plan for a return to work. This involves listening to the ideas and concerns of both parties, and finding practical solutions. When workplace parties are unable to identify safe and suitable jobs at the workplace, or come across barriers in completing their RTW plan, the WSIB can help.

RTW parties vary by workplace and these can include but are not limited to the employer, employee, supervisor, occupational health department representative, Human Resources representative, union/employee representative (if applicable), and Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) or Health and Safety Representative (HSR).

Case Managers make WSIB benefit decisions based on legislation and policy, and work closely with the employer and worker in the return to work and recovery process. They help set realistic recovery and return to work goals, and provide advice and guidance as needed to help workers and employers create and implement a RTW plan.

In some cases, they may identify the need for a WSIB specialist to provide onsite return to work support and assistance. The Case Manager decides which specialist is needed on a case-by-case basis. Sometimes, both a Return to Work Specialist (RTWS) and Work Transition Specialist (WTS) may provide onsite support. Case Managers work together with the specialists, workers and employers to ensure a successful RTW outcome.



The **Return to Work Specialist** services include:

- Worksite meetings to review the pre-injury job and discuss RTW opportunities, identifying how a job could be modified to facilitate a worker's RTW, and develop RTW plans.
- Education on the rights and obligations of both employers and workers.
- Arranging on-site assessments to confirm if an available job is suitable.
- Following up with the worker and employer once a RTW Plan has been implemented, and addressing any new obstacles or issues that may arise.
- Referring to a WTS for additional services.

The **Work Transition Specialist** provides additional support at the worksite. In addition to the services offered by RTWS, they use a variety of tools and assessment options to help the worker return to work with their employer, including:

- Meeting with the worker to review his/her skills and abilities and identify return to work opportunities.
- Assisting the workplace parties in developing a RTW plan in more complex cases and monitoring progress to ensure success.
- Arranging external vocational testing to identify the worker's skills, abilities, aptitudes and interests, and help identify alternate job opportunities with the employer.
- If necessary, arranging short-term skills training or training on the job so that the worker can return to alternate work with the employer.
- Arranging additional services as needed to help the worker return to work with a new employer when he/she is unable to return to the pre-injury employer.

Visit www.wsib.on.ca to find out more information on Return to Work Services

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