

Preparing for a return to work

Employer resource



Your support as an employer is key to helping a worker get back to work safely after an injury.

This means staying in touch with your worker while they are away or unable to work.

Staying connected keeps you updated on your worker's recovery and when they're well enough to come back to work.

Staying in touch

Once your worker is ready to return, reach out and let them know they're a valued team member and you're looking forward to having them back.

Ask if there's anything they're worried about and try to factor this into the conversation and plan.

You might reassure them you'll support them to get back to work. They may even have specific concerns you can address.

Making sure there's a clear plan in place

WorkCover will support you and make sure there's a rehabilitation and return to work plan in place for your worker. This plan needs to be in place within 10 business days of a claim being accepted.

The plan will consider input from you and your worker, as well as their doctor or health providers, and outlines how everyone will work together to help your worker get back safely.

You'll contribute by telling us what suitable duties you will have available for your worker.

Offering suitable duties

Your worker doesn't need to go back to their normal role straight away, and they don't need to be 100 per cent better to start getting back.

Talk about how you can adapt their workload or work environment to help while they recover.

Many employers will offer reduced hours or days that can be increased gradually as a worker gets better.

Watch our video for guidance on **finding suitable duties for a worker with a physical injury**.

Remember, if you can't provide suitable duties, you'll need to let us know why in writing.

Preparing for return with a mental injury

If your worker is recovering from a mental injury, you could check in on how their injury or any medication might be affecting their ability to concentrate, or to cope with people and noise.

They may need different tasks, or regular breaks.

There may be changes in communication. They may need written as well as verbal instructions.

Don't make any assumptions. Just keep asking open questions that show you care.

Watch our video **How do I find suitable duties for a worker recovering from a mental injury?** or **see our guide for more guidance**.



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Watch the video

Preparing for the first day back

The first day back can feel the hardest for your worker, especially if they've been away a while.

Ask what you can do to make them feel more comfortable.

Be clear about who will be there to welcome them back, like a supervisor or buddy.

Stay in touch once your worker is back at work so you'll know if anything changes or they need any further support with their recovery.

Reducing stigma about having a claim

Discuss and decide with your worker what you'll tell their co-workers about their return, ensuring you respect their wishes and their privacy.

You can help reduce stigma by making sure everyone is clear about supporting your worker and any adjustments in place to help them.

Watch our video **Tips for talking to a worker and their team after an injury** for more guidance.

Recovery isn't always linear

Some days may be tougher than others. Just decide that you'll talk openly if you run into any problems.

By being supportive and adaptable, you'll create an engaged workplace to return to.



WorkCover is here to help

If you have any questions, you can find your claim contact on WorkCover Connect and reach them directly. Or you can call one of our team on **1300 927 928**.

workcoverqld.com.au

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