



ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

Policy & Procedure

Title:	Return to Work Program	Number:	AD 10-04
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STANDARD

DHW Long Term Care Facility Program Requirements, FINAL February 2019

8.2 Risk Management: Systems and processes are in place to minimize risk to residents, staff, volunteers, visitors and the home.

Windsor Elms Village Guiding Principles

SAFETY is paramount. We keep each other safe so no one gets hurt. We intervene to prevent injury. COLLABORATION; working together, we are better. We call on each other for support, ideas and problem solving. We build on each other's strengths. We *solicit* and honour all contributions.

Eden Domain of Well-Being

CONNECTEDNESS: The Return To Work Program is intended to provide employees with work opportunities so they can continue to contribute as valuable members of our team while recovering from work and non-work related injuries or illnesses. It has been well established that staying **connected** to the workplace & continuing to work is one of the most important factors in recovery and a successful return to the workplace.

Connectedness is about being connected; alive; belonging; engaged; involved; not detached; connected to place

POLICY

Windsor Elms Village will make every reasonable effort to provide suitable, transitional employment to any staff member who is unable to perform his or her duties following an injury or illness. This standard of practice may include modifying the worker's original position, providing an alternate position or a combination of both depending on the worker's limitations and operational requirements.

SCOPE

The Return to Work (RTW) Program standard of practice applies to all employees at Windsor Elms Village. All employees are required to participate in this program as a condition of employment and the Workers' Compensation Act of Nova Scotia, Section 84.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- To return the employee to the workplace as quickly and safely as possible after any absence due to illness or injury.
- To provide transitional duties that are considered to be meaningful and productive, depending on the employee's limitations and the operational needs of the facility.
- To provide a culture of workplace safety and injury prevention.
- To foster strong communications and relationships between the employee, the employer and the medical providers in the return to work process.
- To provide a comprehensive return to work plan for employees who are temporarily unable to return to their regular duties.

PROCEDURE

1. Injury Response

Immediate medical assessment and treatment as required.

2. Reporting

An Incident Report Form must be completed and submitted to the Supervisor/Manager immediately.

3. Direct Access to Physiotherapy

Sprains/strains benefit from immediate intervention from a qualified Physiotherapist. The Supervisor/Department Head will make the referral to an approved Physiotherapy Clinic for immediate physical assessment.

4. Accident/Occurrence Investigation

Workplace related injuries will be investigated by the Neighbourhood Manager/Department Head in collaboration with the OH&S Committee, as required, to determine its cause in order to prevent future occurrences of the same kind.

5. Developing of an Individual Return-to-Work Plan.

An individual RTW Plan will be developed with input from the necessary RTW team members (ie Physiotherapist, Physician, WCB/LTD, etc). RTW plans can have several possible options including:

Pre-injury job with modifications of some duties

Some pre-injury duties with some new duties

Temporary reduction in hours or work days

Or, any combination of the above.

As an employee's functional ability improves, the RTW Plan will change. Tasks and functions will be altered to return the injured/ill employee back to their pre-injury position as soon as reasonably possible.

6. Monitoring

Regular meetings with the Return-to-Work Team will be held to review the employee's progress. Good communication will ensure that the Return-to-Work Plan meets the needs of the employee as well as the needs of Windsor Elms Village.

7. Follow-Up

Follow up continues even after the return to a pre injury position. Staff must report any problems to their Supervisor/Department Head who will work closely with them to resolve any problems that have arisen.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Employee:

- Maintain regular contact with the Department Head while recovering from an illness or injury. The frequency of contact necessary will be established between the Department Head and the employee at that time.
- Attend all RTW Meetings.
- Ensure all necessary information and documentation is completed and provided to the necessary RTW Team members in a timely manner.
- Adhere to all duties outlined in the RTW Plan
- Take all reasonable steps to reduce or eliminate any permanent impairment or loss of earnings resulting from an injury.
 - Participate in any medical aid or health care treatment to promote recovery as directed by the Health Care provider and WCB case manager.
 - Participate in any discussions regarding the return to work
 - Actively participate in the Return To Work Plan, which may mean curtailing non-work related activities that may impact recovery
 - Take personal responsibility for following the prescribed treatment plan, ie. medical, rehabilitation appointments.
 - Immediately report any changes in accommodation needs and/or task difficulties.

Employer:

- Ensure employees are aware of the Return to Work program and the process is clearly understood.
- Ensure that the returning employee is treated with dignity and respect.
- Provide early intervention to employees to assist in treatment and recovery which may include immediately referring employees with sprain/strain type injuries to a Physiotherapist for a functional assessment (see definition - Direct Access to Physiotherapy)
- Ensure all relevant medical information has been received ie prognosis, limitations, treatment plan, etc.
- Obtain expert opinion and advice from a designated human resources or health professional when necessary.
- Determine transitional duties available to match the functional abilities of the injure/ill employee as well as the operational requirements of the Home.
- Ensure employees understand both the employer's and the employees' obligations to participate and cooperate in the return to work process.
- Facilitate the safe and timely return to work of injured / ill employees
- Take an active role in identifying modifications available to accommodate the employee.
- Coordinate and participate in RTW meetings
- Ensure all necessary documentation is completed and provided to the necessary RTW Team member.
- Acts as a liaison between the RTW Team members
- Develop and implement a RTW Plan with input from team members and ensure it is updated as required
- Maintain a written record of the RTW Plan.
- Facilitate a supportive environment for the employee's return to work

- Facilitate communication with co-workers regarding an employee's abilities and limitations
- Monitor the employee's progress and alter the duties based on changes in restrictions and be willing to modify the return to work plan as individual circumstances arise.
- Provide follow-up support to injured/ ill employees.
- Maintain confidentiality with medical information

LTD/WCB Case Worker:

- Adhere to the Workers' Compensation Act of Nova Scotia and associated WCB Policies or LTD provider policies if applicable.
- Objectively and fairly weigh evidence and make claim decisions in a timely manner.
- Administer health care and earning replacement benefits
- Ensure all relevant medical information has been received and appropriate treatment is initiated.
- Assist in the development and management of Return to Work Plans
- Coordinate and monitor the success of required health care services and rehabilitation
- Communicate and collaborate with all parties involved in the Return to Work planning process
- Ensure the employer and the employee adheres to their responsibilities in the return to work process.

Health Care Providers:

- Provide services to injured employees in a timely manner to improve their ability and help them safely return to work
- Identify issues and barriers influencing return to work plans and make recommendations to address these issues
- Manage the injured employee's recovery expectations
- Communicate and collaborate with all parties involved in the return to work process as required
- Provide functional ability evaluations of injured employees
- Contribute his or her expertise to the development of the RTW Plan in a timely manner.

DEFINITIONS:

Direct Access to Physiotherapy - Employees who incur sprain/strain type of injuries can be sent directly to an approved Physiotherapist, without a referral from a Physician. The Physiotherapist will conduct an immediate assessment of the injured employee's functional abilities.

Functional Abilities – Abilities determined by an approved medical service provider that are safe for the injured worker and will not cause harm if completed.

Physical Abilities – The physical capabilities necessary for an employee to complete the duties & tasks of a position.

Physiotherapy Clinic Partnership – A relationship with an approved Physiotherapy Clinic that provides the services to meet our needs, such as worksite visits and job site analyses for various positions. As a partner the Clinic understands the nature of our work, our people and is able to provide timely access for assessments after an injury as well as appropriate follow up.

Job Site Analysis (JSA) – A method used to identify, analyze and record:

- 1) The steps involved in performing a specific job
- 2) The existing or potential safety and health hazards associated with each step
- 3) The recommended action(s)/procedure(s) that will eliminate or reduce these hazards and the risk of a workplace injury or illness.

Return to Work - The process of restoring an injured or ill worker to the fullest possible function in a safe and timely manner utilizing the benefits & services provided by the WCB/LTD (where applicable) and our health care providers.

Return to Work Plan - An individual, progressive plan developed by the RTW Team to assist injured/ill workers in returning to work in a safe and timely manner. The RTW plan may include the use of transitional duties or a modified work schedule to assist the employee return to full, pre-injury duties.

Return to Work Team - A group of individuals who work together to develop, monitor and alter the Return to Work Plan as necessary. The RTW Team consists of the injured/ill employee, the employee's immediate supervisor, the Department Head, WCB/LTD case worker (if applicable), and the appropriate medical provider (ie Physician, Physiotherapist, Chiropractor, etc.).

Transitional Duties – Meaningful, productive duties that are within the injured worker's skills and abilities and may be assigned on a temporary basis when a worker cannot complete his/her pre-injury duties as a result of an injury or illness.

Transitional duties may include:

- Pre-injury job with modifications of some duties
- Some pre-injury duties with some new duties
- Temporary reduction in hours or work days
- Or, any combination of the above.

REFERENCES

- WCB Preventing Workplace Injuries: A Resource Manual
- NS WCB Act
- Canadian Human Rights Commission: A Guide for Managing the Return to Work

Supporting policies

Health & Safety

Attendance Management