

## Return-to-Work Planning Meetings (RTWPM)

A return-to-work planning meeting (RTWPM) helps employers, workers and claim owners develop a return-to-work plan, ensuring the worker returns to work safely and timely. These meetings are a collaborative effort to assist with early, safe and sustainable return to work.

### What is the purpose of a RTWPM?

- To identify suitable modified work options and develop a specific return-to-work (RTW) plan for the injured worker.
- To create a progressive RTW plan designed to promote recovery and assist with a return to full duties.
- To discuss and address the specific barriers for the injured worker, taking into account the goal of injury recovery and return to work.
- To objectively measure and document the worker's job demands.

### Who is required to participate?

RTWPMs have been proven to successfully assist injured workers in returning to work. Face-to-face meetings allow employers to reconnect with their employee and develop individualized RTW plans. For that reason, the following stakeholders are required to participate:

- The injured worker.
- The employer and/or representative.
- The union representative (it is an expectation of the provider that, prior to delivering the service, the worker is asked if they have union representation, even if this is not noted in the referral).
- While it is not an expectation that the claim owner attend the RTWPM, it is an expectation that they are part of the conference call after the RTWPM, in an effort to discuss the outcome of the meeting and the RTW plan moving forward.

### What are the benefits of a RTWPM?

- Expedite the RTW process and reduce the impact of time loss on the injured worker and employer.
- Provide workplace education regarding injury prevention and avoiding re-aggravation of the worker's injury.
- Address concerns regarding RTW.
- Assist with the progression of the injured worker to pre-accident status.
- Assist in identifying appropriate modified duty options and ensuring that the worker is physically suitable for that level of activity.

### As a Provider, how can I improve the RTWPM process?

- Ensure the purpose of the RTWPM has been communicated to the stakeholders and the expectations of each participant are clear.
- Ensure all participants are available to attend.
- Be clear in addressing the purpose of the RTWPM at the outset of the meeting as well as in the reporting.
- Provide clear information in the RTWPM report to explain the date of accident duties and the availability of modified duties, in a manner that all stakeholders can understand.
- Document the specific measurements that pertain to the date of accident duties and the available modified duties.
- Confirm understanding and agreement from all stakeholders prior to concluding the meeting.
- Follow-up with stakeholders once the report has been completed to further ensure consensus.

## When should a RTWPM referral occur?

- When the injured worker is not working.
- When there has been difficulty in identifying modified duties for the worker.
- When the worker is performing modified duties but there is no plan to progress to full duties.
- When RTW issues have been voiced by worker or employer.
- When there has been a discrepancy identified by the worker (or their union representative) or employer regarding the details of the date of accident work or the suitability of the modified work.

## Can a return-to-work planning discussion happen instead of a return-to-work planning meeting?

A return-to-work planning discussion can only be scheduled if all of the following applies:

- You have a current Physical Demands Analysis and details pertaining to modified work.
- You have confirmed that the claim owner only requires discussion and confirmation of the RTW plan.
- The employer has suitable modified duties and there are no apparent concerns about RTW.
- The employer is not able to schedule a timely RTWPM due to extensive travel or limited availability.

## Task level guidelines

### Limited work

Exerting up to 5 kg (11 lbs) of force.

### Light work

Exerting up to 10 kg (22 lbs) of force.

### Medium work

Exerting up to 20 kg (44 lbs) of force.

### Heavy work

Exerting over 20 kg (44 lbs) of force.

*\*Reference: The North American Occupation Classification (NOC)*

When determining a worker's fitness for work and suitability for a position, you need to also consider the frequency at which the task is performed. For example, if a worker's regular job duties require them to lift 11 kg (medium level) from their waist to an overhead position on a **frequent** basis, but they are only able to lift 11 kg on an **occasional** basis, this would be considered a work restriction.

Frequency is commented on by medical professionals as follows:

**Never**—0% of the day

**Rarely**—1-5% or not daily

**Occasional**—6-33% of the day

**Frequent**—34-66% of the day

**Constant**—67-100% of the day

