

Successful Return-to-Work: Good for employees, good for profits.



As a business leader, you work hard every day to protect two critical assets — your people and your profits. Although the prevention of injuries is always goal number one, managing injuries that do occur is also critical to your organization's success.

Every business should consider adopting and implementing a return-to-work program that can help injured employees get back to meaningful work as soon as medically possible. At Nationwide®, we call this Successful Return-to-Work (SRTW), and many leading companies use it to integrate both occupational and non-occupational injuries into a comprehensive disability management strategy.

Consider the benefits of Successful Return-to-Work.



Improve communication with injured employees



Improve medical outcomes and reduce re-injury risk



Tackle your "rainy day" to-do list



Maintain necessary employee productivity



Keep employees in their normal routines



Reduce workers' compensation premiums

Successful Return-to-Work programs are a win-win for you and your employees.

Key elements of a successful program.

Determine your written policy and procedures — Use our interactive PDF with suggested wording for your policy and procedures, as well as roles and responsibilities for employees, supervisors, safety personnel and human resources. So that you can modify the text to suit your needs, we provide the same information in an editable document.

Communicate with injured employees early and often — This shows them the company cares about their well-being. After an injury occurs and medical care is provided, call or visit the injured employee within 24 hours. Then, maintain frequent contact with the person throughout the term of the injury or illness. Also, inform the individual of his/her rights and responsibilities as an injured employee, explain your company's Return-to-Work Program and answer any questions.



Discuss your Return-to-Work Program with the authorized treatment provider — Provide him/her with the injured employee's written job description, which should detail the physical demands of the person's regular job. Include a letter that notifies the physician of the availability of transitional-duty assignments, and indicate that your company can assist in the employee's recovery. When transitional duty isn't an option, the result is often an extended period of doctor-approved disability.

The advantages of transitional duty.

Transitional duty allows an injured employee to return to or remain at work, performing physically appropriate duties. Job modifications are developed and implemented based on the injured employee's limitations, restrictions, functional capacity and physical capabilities. As the employer, you should:

- Compare the employee's functional capabilities to the job requirements, and decide to what extent the job can be modified
- If modifying the employee's regular job isn't possible, identify other alternate-duty opportunities on a limited or full-time basis
- When assigning transitional duties, take a positive approach and focus on what employees can do, rather than tasks they can't perform
- Assign meaningful duties that allow injured employees to maintain their dignity
- Revise current job descriptions to include only necessary tasks
- Assign tasks that may have been put off or that are being done only occasionally, such as inventorying supplies or reviewing old files
- Temporarily reassign tasks to free up other employees
- Ensure that employees and their co-workers fully understand that this is temporary work, and that injured employees are expected to return to their full jobs as soon as medically able
- Review the assignment regularly, in cooperation with the Nationwide Claims Associate and authorized treatment provider



READY TO INCORPORATE THE IDEA OF SUCCESSFUL RETURN-TO-WORK INTO YOUR COMPANY CULTURE?

It's easy, using the convenient Return-to-Work Program template available exclusively to Nationwide customers on MyLossControlServices.com. Just follow our step-by-step implementation checklist to guide you through the process of putting your program in place.

Providing solutions to help our members manage risk.®



For your risk management and safety needs, contact Nationwide Loss Control Services: 1-866-808-2101 or LCS@nationwide.com.