



RETURN TO WORK POLICY

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Return to Work

At 24 Hour Priority Care Australia (24HPCA) we value the health and safety of our workers, and we are committed to providing a safe workplace. This policy provides a framework to ensure that workers return to work following an injury safely and effectively.

Purpose

This policy outlines represents our commitment to the health, safety and recovery of workers who have acquired an injury or illness as a result of a workplace incident or accident.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees and workers of 24 Hour Priority Care Australia (24HPCA).

Employee obligations

Under this policy workers are required to:

- notify their manager of any injury as soon as is practicable and complete an DINMA and incident form;
- make reasonable efforts to actively participate and co-operate with the company in planning their return to work;
- actively use an occupational rehabilitation service and co-operate with the provider of that service;
- actively participate and co-operate in any assessment of:
 - the worker's capacity to work;
 - rehabilitation progress; and
 - future employment prospects
- make reasonable efforts to return to work in suitable employment or their pre-injury employment; and
- participate in any interview for the purpose of enhancing the worker's opportunity to return to work.

Failing to comply with these responsibilities may result in corrective action undertaken, such as the employee attending further training, or it may result disciplinary action.

Employer obligations

24 Hour Priority Care Australia (24HPCA) will, to the extent that it is reasonable to do so:

- provide to the worker suitable employment, taking into account the capacity of the worker as a result of the injury; and pre-injury employment, if the worker no longer has an incapacity to work;
- plan the worker's return to work by:
 - obtaining relevant information about the worker's capacity to work;
 - considering reasonable workplace support, aids or modifications to assist in the worker's return to work;
 - assessing and proposing options for suitable employment and pre-injury employment; and

- consulting with relevant parties;
- consult with the worker, the worker's healthcare practitioner and any provider of occupational rehabilitation services about the return to work of the employee by:
 - sharing information about the worker's return to work;
 - providing a reasonable opportunity for those persons to consider and express their views about the worker's return to work; and
 - taking those views into account.
- inform the insurer of all injuries within 48 hours of their occurrence.

The Return to Work Coordinator will ensure that all parties honour their obligations under this policy.

Return to Work Plan

A return to work (RTW) plan will be developed to help injured workers stay at work or return to their pre-injury work duties.

24 Hour Priority Care Australia (24HPCA) will take all reasonable steps to provide suitable employment for employees who are undertaking a rehabilitation program. Reasonable adjustments may also be required to provide support for recovery and return to work.

Employees will be consulted on their rehabilitation program. Active engagement in the development of RTW program empowers employees and supports better return to work outcomes.

Dispute Process

24 Hour Priority Care Australia (24HPCA) dispute management process for dealing with injury management disputes includes the involvement of non-workplace parties who may assist in the management of a dispute e.g. external consultants for an independent medical opinion.

In the event the dispute cannot be resolved the issue may be referred to the Workers Compensation Commission for resolution.

Workers' compensation agencies

Contact details

State or Territory	Responsible Agency	Contact details
Victoria	WorkSafe Victoria	Phone: 1800 136 089 www.worksafe.vic.gov.au
NSW	WorkCover NSW	Phone: 13 10 50 www.workcover.nsw.gov.au
Queensland	WorkCover Queensland	Phone: 1300 362 128 www.workcoverqld.com.au
SA	WorkCover SA	Phone: 13 18 55 www.workcover.com
WA	WorkCover WA	Phone: 1300 794 744 www.workcover.wa.gov.au
ACT	WorkSafe ACT	Phone: (02) 6207 3000 www.worksafe.act.gov.au
NT	NT WorkSafe	Phone: 1800 250 173 www.worksafe.nt.gov.au
Tasmania	WorkCover Tasmania	Phone: 1300 776 752 www.workcover.tas.gov.au

Further information on Return to Work

For further information on this policy please contact Marina Iline, People and Culture Officer and Return to Work Coordinator on 9969 8878 or email marina@24hourprioritycare.com.au.

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Sample Procedure

Return to Work Procedure

Step 1 – Notification of injury or illness

Once a supervisor has been notified that a worker has experienced an accident, injury or illness, <insert title of appropriate person, e.g., HR/Health & Safety Manager> should:

- discuss immediate needs with the employee
- take steps to prevent further injury or illness.
- document details in the injury management system <insert name of system, e.g., IRiS>

This step should be done whether the employee intends to make a worker's compensation claim or not.

Step 2 – Appoint a rehabilitation case manager

As soon as <insert title of the appropriate person, e.g., HR/Health & Safety Manager> are aware that an employee is ill or injured, a rehabilitation case manager should be appointed within <insert name of organisation>.

The rehabilitation case manager will generally contact the employee within 24 hours to discuss:

- their injury
- their return to work needs and any reasonable adjustments that can be made
- any potential barriers.

Step 3 – Assess the need for rehabilitation

The rehabilitation case manager organises a rehabilitation assessment if they decide an assessment is required to help prepare the employee's return to work (rehabilitation) program.

They must also organise an assessment if the employee requests a rehabilitation assessment.

An assessment may not be required if:

- the employee only has minor restrictions, or
- their treating medical practitioner says they are fit to return to work.

In this case, the medical practitioner must provide clear medical guidance on the employee's capacity for work.

Step 4 – Organise a rehabilitation assessment (if requested or required)

Organising a rehabilitation assessment

If the employee needs a rehabilitation assessment, or they have requested one, the rehabilitation case manager chooses an appropriate assessor.

A rehabilitation assessment can be performed by a:

- legally qualified medical practitioner
- suitably qualified person, such as an approved workplace rehabilitation provider, or
- panel of people.

The rehabilitation case manager provides the assessor with information about the employee's circumstances. This may include:

- medical reports
- details of their pre-injury employment
- a schedule of questions to be answered.

The assessment will generally include an interview or examination with the employee.

If the employee is asked to attend a rehabilitation assessment, they must do so, unless they have a reasonable excuse for failing or refusing to attend.

Outcome of a rehabilitation assessment

A rehabilitation assessment provides information about:

- an employee's injury
- an employee's fitness to remain at or return to work
- recommendations to support a safe and early return to work, including any reasonable adjustments.

Following the assessment, a report is usually provided to the rehabilitation case manager. The report details the employee's capacity to participate in rehabilitation.

The rehabilitation case manager uses this report to structure a return to work (rehabilitation) program for the employee.

Step 5 – Arrange a rehabilitation program (if needed)

The rehabilitation case manager decides whether the employee needs a rehabilitation program to help them return to, or recover at, work.

A rehabilitation program is a structured series of activities and supports designed to:

- maintain or return an employee to suitable employment, and/or
- maintain or improve an employee's daily living activities.

The rehabilitation program outlines the support and services an employee needs to return to work quickly and safely.

A rehabilitation program is usually coordinated by a rehabilitation case manager or a workplace rehabilitation provider.

Step 6 – Monitor the rehabilitation program

<insert name of organisation> will monitor the:

- progress of our employee's rehabilitation program
- performance of a workplace rehabilitation provider (if one has been engaged).

This process is important to make sure a rehabilitation program:

- is responsive to any barriers to return to work
- matches the employee's needs
- is effective for the stage of recovery.

Monitoring of the program can provide information about:

- the employee's work capacity
- progress against agreed milestones and activities
- changes to the employee's injury or condition
- the effectiveness of any reasonable adjustments provided
- supervisor and colleague support
- performance of the workplace rehabilitation provider against agreed activities
- Changes to the availability of suitable employment.

Step 7 – Provide suitable employment

<insert name of organisation> is responsible for providing suitable employment. Suitable duties meet an employee's capacities, skills and experience and consider any medical limitations.

This can involve:

- *modifying duties*
- *providing alternative duties*
- *graduated return to work*
- *internal placement*
- *permanent redeployment*
- *work trial.*

Step 8 – Close the rehabilitation program

The program is closed when:

- the objectives of the rehabilitation program have been achieved, or
- current rehabilitation goals are no longer achievable and a new rehabilitation program is needed.

Closing a rehabilitation program does not stop rehabilitation services being provided in the future if the employee's circumstances change.