

DEVELOPING & IMPLEMENTING AN INJURY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

POLICY

A written injury management policy is an important part of managing work-related injury and illness in your workplace and an important step in demonstrating management commitment. An injury management policy states:

- The employer's commitment to injury management
- The goals and objectives for injury management
- A general statement of responsibilities of management, workers, visitors and contractors

Process

Draft	Draft your policy and have it signed and dated by the President, CEO or senior management
State goals	State goals for the injury management program such as: • Establishing a clear process for all employees following injury or illness • Minimize impact of work-related injuries/illnesses on productivity • Ensure fair and consistent treatment of all injured/ill workers • Reduce costs associated with work-related injuries/illnesses • Reduce number of days lost to injury/illnesses • Provide best possible response to the management of workplace injuries so injured workers can remain at work or return to work at the earliest appropriate time
Identify	Identify the name of the person designated as the company Injury Management Coordinator
Communicate	Communicate the policy by posting in prominent places or make it accessible through employee handbooks, health and safety manual, company website, memos, or newsletters/bulletins
Include	Include the policy as part of new worker orientation and health and safety manual

Resources

[Injury Management Policy \(Sample\)](#)

RESPONSIBILITIES

A successful Injury Management program takes a team effort with everyone understanding their roles and responsibilities. Employers, supervisors, first aid attendants, injury management coordinators, and workers must all be able to carry out their roles effectively when there is a workplace injury. Regardless of the structure of the company, one employee must be assigned with the responsibility to oversee the program activities. This person is usually titled 'Injury Management Coordinator.' In larger organizations, there will most likely be a person with the title of Injury Management Coordinator. In smaller companies, the person may not have the title but someone still needs to be assigned.

Each of the roles that play a part in injury management should be clearly outlined in an injury management program.

Persons that must be included in the manual:

- Supervisor
- First Aid Attendant
- Injured or Ill Worker
- Doctor/Health Care Provider
- Injury Management Coordinator

Process

Designate	Designate a person who will be responsible for the management and coordination of the injury management program, including overseeing and working with supervisors to manage injuries
Train	Train the person who will be responsible for managing or coordinating injuries. There are several free courses such as the Employers Advisers seminars, or BCCSA's Principles of Injury Management course
Draft	Draft an explanation of responsibilities for all parties in the company as they relate to the operation of the injury management program. These may include employer, injury management coordinator, supervisor, first aid attendant and worker
Communicate	Communicate the responsibilities within the program to the appropriate parties. This can be done via safety meetings when introducing or refreshing information on the program. You may also want to distribute information along with paystubs

List of responsibilities by role

Supervisor

- maintains a positive working relationship with all employees fairly and consistently
- identifies and deals with interpersonal or job-related issues
- informs and educates employees on the IM program
- walks the talk and promotes the success of the program
- allows the First Aid Attendant sufficient time to treat and record and follow up
- talks with the worker as soon as possible
- for less serious injuries when the worker can stay at work, together plans modified or alternate duties
- is involved with the Job Demands Analyses (JDAs)
- is involved with the Information Package for the Physician and job offer (possible tasks)
- where possible accompanies the injured worker to medical care after the injury
- reminds injured worker of the required paperwork and communicates expectations
- contacts the Injury Management Coordinator
- assists in the Stay at Work or RTW plans by identifying modified or alternate work
- collaborates with the worker and their health care provider
- meets with the injured worker at regular intervals. Connects worker to the workplace

First Aid Attendant

- provides immediate excellent first aid
- immediately informs the supervisor of any injury
- decides on return to work or to medical
- reminds worker of the IM process
- completes all necessary paperwork; records details including subsequent first aid
- communicates with the Injury Management Coordinator
- notifies the supervisor of any change in condition of the injured worker

Injured or Ill Worker

- attends all education sessions reminding about the reporting injury process
- reports all injuries immediately and obtains first aid as required
- works with Stay at Work guidelines including modified or alternate duties, or if requires medical aid, takes the Information Package for the Physician
- informs treating physician of modified and alternate work opportunities at the workplace
- participates in creating and following through with their RTW plan
- communicates with the employer, IM Coordinator, WorkSafeBC and health care providers about progress
- maintains a healthy lifestyle

List of responsibilities by role - continued

Doctor/Health Care Providers

This group includes the worker's attending physicians, specialist, treatment plan providers (i.e. physiotherapy, chiropractor etc.) They:

- provide information on the worker's functional abilities (what the worker can do) by completing the Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work Planning form

Injury Management Coordinator

The Injury Management Coordinator is the key liaison. The IM Coordinator facilitates the IM process by coordinating the parties involved, regularly monitors the status of each claim, and following up with workers as the return to their pre-injury duties.

Their functions include:

- ensuring Job Demands Analyses for all jobs and compiling lists of possible suitable alternate duties
- ensuring the Information Package for the Physician is current
- assisting injured workers to stay at work or return to work
- working with supervisors to ensure communication with the injured worker
- encouraging the injured worker to be part of the workplace
- acting as the key liaison for the company
- working with WorkSafeBC and health care providers
- taking steps to prevent the recurrence or aggravation when the worker RTWs work
- tracking progress of RTW plan, costs and frequency trends of workplace injuries, and maintains the confidentiality of worker's records

Courses

Employers' Advisers

BCCSA

BENEFITS

In the past, workers and employers thought that injured workers could return to work only when they'd fully recovered. Today, safe and productive work is understood and promoted to be a form of therapy. Outlining the benefits of an injury management program is essential to gaining buy in from employees, which is important in ensuring the success of the program.

There are many benefits to Injury Management, these benefits include:

- Early return to work following an injury helps control costs directly related to the injury
- Reduction on the potential impact of the injury on the employer's business as well as on the injured worker's life
- Studies show that injured workers who return to productive work as early as possible following an injury heal faster and better than those injured workers who remain off work
- Injured workers who return to work during their healing period tend to require fewer medical treatments and incur less medical expense related to the injury
- Work becomes part of treatment and rehabilitation and allows the injured worker to take an active role in his/her recovery
- An Injury Management program provides employers with effective tools for managing compensation costs and the business costs related to lost time
- An Injury Management program prepares everyone ahead of time in the event of an injury and sets the expectations for both employers and employees

Work provides a wealth of benefits to people – financial, physical, mental and emotional. It provides a sense of accomplishment and a feeling of belonging. It is a place to socialize, and, for many, an identity. When we are away from work, we lose these things. Over time, the effects can be dramatic.

It is important to consider the potential harm that can result when injured workers can't stay at work or promptly return to their jobs following an injury. Many think that being away from work reduces stress and promotes healing. They do not consider that the worker's daily life has been disrupted. That attitude itself can heighten or cause unnecessary disability, resulting in extended time off work.

Process

Draft	Draft a brief introduction stating the benefits of injury management for both the recovery of the worker and the employer
Promote	Promote the program by posting informational materials
Communicate	Communicate the benefits of the program to your Supervisors, and workers during: • Safety meetings when introducing or refreshing information on the program • New hire orientations • You may also want to distribute information along with paystubs

Resources

[Watch 'An Introduction to Classification, Rate Setting, and Experience Rating'](#)

THE INJURY MANAGEMENT PROCESS: KEEPING WORKERS IN THE WORKPLACE

If a worker gets injured an employer needs a game plan that all of your team is on board with. Since many players are involved, communication between all is super important.

The basic process of managing workplace injuries follows 4 steps:

1. The initial response
2. Developing an individual IM plan
3. Implementing and monitoring
4. Evaluating and reporting

*Note that this will not necessarily always be the order the process follows. Ex. A worker may call their supervisor in the morning to inform that they were at the clinic the previous night due to an injury in the workplace during the day that was not reported previously.

1. The Initial Response

The moments spent in response following an injury have a big impact on the success of having the worker remain at work to heal.

Assess the Injury

Your first objective is to assist the injured worker and assess whether further medical attention is required. The assessment will help determine whether the worker can remain at work performing their full regular pre-injury job duties; or requires modified or alternate work duties based on their temporary limitations; or requires further medical attention.

Communicate with the Worker

Inform the worker of the benefits and options of recovering at work, so that they can relay the information and plan with their doctor when they are assessed. A doctor may assign time off for the worker to heal, and you may not receive information on the worker's capabilities, if the worker doesn't communicate that there is modified or alternate work available for them. Your objective is to be able to provide alternate or modified work within the worker's limitations so that the worker can recover with as minimal disruption to their life as possible.

The First Aid attendant, being the first point of contact with an injured worker, initiates the discussion, and may even provide the Information Package for the Physician and a Letter to the Worker prior to the supervisor arriving.

The Supervisor will ideally transport the worker to medical aid, and begin conversations about options available to recover at work. It's a good idea to start chatting about the types of work available during the drive over, or while waiting at the clinic.

Initial Document

If the worker is going to a clinic or the ER, the Supervisor or First Aid Attendant will provide the worker with the paperwork to be completed that is needed for the employer and worker to make a plan for the recovery after the assessment by the physician.

An employer will need to know what limitations the worker now has due to the injury before modified or alternate work can be discussed. The physician and worker will be able to provide you with the limitations.

The employer will provide the worker with the following documents:

1. A Letter to the Employee - describing the injury management process
2. The Information Package for the Physician, containing:
 - A Letter to the Physician
 - Stay At Work/Return to Work Planning Form

Good Tips!

Identify clinicians local to your jobsite prior to project start-up and communicate your injury management program to them and discuss whether they are supportive of it

Some clinicians charge for the completion of forms. You may be able to set up an account to ensure money won't be a barrier in your process

2. Developing an Individual IM plan

Review the SAW/RTW Planning Form

Once the worker has been assessed by the physician, find a comfortable spot to debrief the incident, and review the completed Stay at Work/Return to Work Planning Form. The purpose of this is to determine the worker's functional limitations so that the employer can identify tasks in the company that the worker can still do, despite their injury. The objective is to keep the worker attached to the workplace during their period of recovery.

Identify Modified or Alternate Duties

The employer can either modify the worker's current tasks, or provide alternate work tasks, or offer a combination of both. The work offered must be safe, meaningful and productive subject to the worker's skills, abilities and physical limitations.

Good Tips!

If the Stay at Work/Return to Work Planning Form has not been completed for any reason, an employer can discuss limitations with the worker and agree to interim modified or alternate work until another appointment is scheduled to complete the paperwork

2. Developing an Individual IM plan - *continued*

What is the difference between Modified and Alternate Work?

Modified work entails a modification to the job or position that the worker performed prior to the injury/illness and it may or may not be located at the same jobsite. Modifications may include changes to specific tasks or the methods in which the tasks are carried out, physical changes to a work area, changes in the equipment used, the provision of assistive/additional equipment (e.g. footstool or ladder), and/or the re-organization or elimination of certain tasks (e.g. elimination of duties that require the worker to lift over a specified weight or height).

Alternative work is offered to an injured worker when his/her regular pre-injury duties cannot be modified sufficiently to accommodate the worker's physical limitation, medical restrictions, and abilities. The work offered by the employer will be different from the work performed prior to the injury/illness and it may or may not be located at the same jobsite.

The Modified/Alternate Work Offer

Once modified or alternate work is identified, it needs to be documented and signed off on by both the employer and the worker. Ideally, this should be drafted the same day of the injury to avoid misunderstanding of the expectation to be at work the next day.

Inventory of Modified or Alternate Work (Job Jar)

During the development of your program, it's a good practice to identify options for modifying work and alternate tasks in advance.

Having a ready-made inventory of alternate tasks, also known as a 'job-jar', can be an efficient way to assist in identifying work. Some employers list these tasks by department, level of physical activity required (light, medium, medium/regular) or by injured body part. Ex. Ankle injuries would list work that can be done in a mostly sitting position where the ankle could be elevated.

Having an idea of what alternate tasks are available, in advance is far better than having nothing and will leave you much better prepared when an injury happens.

The employer will need to ensure that whomever is tasked with managing injuries is familiar with the range of options for work that are available within your organization. As well, supervisors understand that they can and should provide modified or alternate duties to help injured workers stay at work while they recover. Keep in mind, however, that each situation is individual and a "cookie cutter" approach to modifying or selecting modified tasks will not succeed.

All parties involved with the management of the injury must work together with the worker to determine if work tasks can be modified.

2. Developing an Individual IM plan - *continued*

Process

Draft	Draft a process for reporting and managing an injury in the workplace. You may want to consider also creating a flowchart of the process
Adopt	Adopt forms to include in an injury management kit which contains the paperwork for the doctor that a worker would need to take with them to the clinic
Train	Train those who have responsibilities in the injury management process, from workers, first aid attendants, supervisors and injury management coordinators
Communicate	Communicate the roles and responsibilities of each party who may be involved in worker recovery
Promote and be ready	Promote and be ready by posting information on the process, and having ready made kits containing required documents, should an injury occur

3. Implementing & Monitoring

Implementing the Modified/Alternate Work Offer requires coordination to sustain a successful recovery at work. Before placing the worker on his/her modified or alternate duties, ensure you:

- Inform co-worker's and rally their support in helping the worker
- Conduct any modifications required and ensure the modifications are safe
- Train the injured worker in the job duties and safe work procedures.

The Modified or Alternate Work Offer should be reviewed on a regular basis (i.e. weekly) to ensure the tasks are still suitable for the worker. As the worker recovers, they may be able to perform more physical tasks, or they may need to scale back if their injury is being aggravated, or they have a restorative surgery during their recovery time. When there is a need for task change, the Modified/Alternate Work Offer must be revised or a new version written.

During the period of accommodation:

- Daily communication between the worker and the supervisor
- Adjust the Work Offer as issues arise or as worker's condition improves

The frequency of communication should be identified in your injury management program. It is common for employers to check in with a worker at the end of each week. Supervisors and workers will have more frequent communication, to ensure the tasks agreed upon are still appropriate.

3. Implementing & Monitoring - *continued*

Process

Identify	Identify initial contact and frequency of communications and include this in your manual process
Adopt	Adopt a communication log to track details of conversations with the worker
Define	Define when changes to the Modified or Alternate Work Offers are required, and who is responsible to change them

4. Evaluating & Reporting

In order to have successful, credible program employers will need to know what has been working in the program and what needs improvement. To do so, employers will need to be able to identify patterns of areas for improvement.

Whomever is managing the program must know where to access the information.

Regardless of how you measure success, employers can analyze the results and report on successes and failures. If the program is not effective and problem areas are not addressed, the program will lose credibility.

Process

Draft a policy	Draft a policy and include the purpose of collecting data on workplace injury outcomes
Identify	Identify what data is collected, frequency of reviews, who is responsible, and how the information will be used. i.e. Opportunities to improve the program; Examples of data to collect: • # of Time-loss days • # of days workers are on modified or alternate work duties • Delays in injury reporting ie. date of injury vs date reported to employer
Identify	Identify who and when to communicate the outcomes of the review and any corrective actions to be made

Resources

Forms

[Letter to Employee](#)

[Modified or Alternate Work Offer](#)

[Communication Log](#)

Information Package for the Physician

[Letter to Physician](#)

[Stay At Work/ Return to Work Planning Form](#)

Other resources

[Typical Physical Limitations for Common Injuries](#)

[Selective/Light Employment for Employers](#)

[Injury Management Flowchart](#)

[WorkSafeBC Publication: Practice Directive C5-5 Selective/Light Employment](#)

[WorkSafeBC's Employer Toolkit](#)