

**Return
to Work
Benefits**

Return to Work (RTW) Benefits: Worker	
Promotes psychological, physical and social health and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prolonged absence from the workplace is detrimental to a person’s mental, physical and social well-being. Studies show that RTW often results in better health outcomes than if the injured worker recovers entirely at home.
Prevents unnecessary disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The longer an injured worker is away from work, the less likely he/she will ever return. Statistics show that after six months, the likelihood is 50 per cent; after one year, the chance drops to 20 per cent; and after two years, to 10 per cent. Research confirms that injured workers who never lose time from work have better outcomes than injured workers who lose time from work. This is why early accommodation is key in return-to-work outcomes.
Reduces possibility of developing secondary conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The longer an injured worker is away from the work environment, the greater the potential for developing a secondary condition. Changes in habits, such as reduced physical activity, eating more; unhealthy eating, increased smoking, increased alcohol consumption or changes in sleep habits can lead to a deterioration in general physical fitness and health and hinder recovery. There is also a greater potential for depression. RTW assists in maintaining an injured worker’s capabilities/functions and preventing secondary conditions from developing.
Preserves self-identity and self-worth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person’s self-identify and self-worth are influenced by his/her view of himself/herself as a working and contributing member of his/her family unit and community. When this role is taken away, a person’s confidence and self-worth can be weakened. • An injured worker can begin to view himself/herself as an extension of his/her injury – that is, disabled and handicapped. Once an injured worker views himself/herself as disabled and handicapped, regardless of actual medical diagnosis, confidence and motivation to return to work is reduced. RTW helps an injured worker maintain self-identity and self-worth.
Protects employability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While an injured worker may not be able to do his/her original job, he/she can still make valuable contributions to the workplace.



Maintains occupational bond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A workplace changes over time — personnel, procedures, policies, tools, equipment, etc. It can be intimidating for an injured worker to return to the workplace after an extended absence. RTW keeps an injured worker on site and doing productive work.
Maintains social bonds with co-workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTW helps the injured worker maintain social relationships with co-workers. Social interaction contributes to psychological health, which in turn contributes to physical health and the recovery process.
Protects worker benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTW may help ensure an injured worker's participation in, and entitlement to, any employer medical/dental programs. Other benefit programs are not impacted by a work injury.
Reduces impact of disability on injured worker's family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family members are generally very supportive when a worker is first injured, but this can change if the injured worker's recovery is prolonged or not advancing as expected. RTW benefits the injured worker and his/her family by facilitating recovery, protecting against development of secondary conditions and reducing further disability.
Meets the WCB's legislated RTW requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Workers' Compensation Act, 2013</i>, Section 51: A worker shall (b) if the circumstances require, co-operate with the board in the development of a rehabilitation plan that is intended to return the worker to a position of independence in suitable productive employment.

Benefits: Employer

Maintains skilled and stable workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe and timely RTW improves injured workers' health outcomes, and preserves a skilled and stable workforce. • RTW prevents loss of valuable worker knowledge/skills/experience. • RTW allows for cross training and in-house transfer of worker knowledge/skills/experience.
Reduces costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTW reduces the cost of replacing and hiring new staff (ads, interviews, intake, training, etc.).
Maintains productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTW minimizes disruptions to productivity.
Meets the WCB's legislated RTW requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Workers' Compensation Act, 2013</i>, Section 53: Duty of employer to co-operate to achieve worker's return to employment — requires an employer to co-operate with the board and the worker to achieve the early and safe return of an injured worker to his or her employment.



Reduces the WCB's costs and premiums

- An employer's WCB premium is determined by the employer's claims history and rate code as a whole.
- RTW positively impacts an employer's claims cost experience by reducing costs as the injured worker is returned to alternate/modified work as soon as he/she is medically able.
- Lower claims costs decrease the likelihood of the employer being surcharged, and increase the likelihood of the employer receiving a discount.

**RTW
Factors
that Support
Success**

Factors that contribute to the success of a RTW process include:

- Provision of a healthy and safe work environment.
- Collaborative approach to RTW:
 - Team approach in the development, implementation, monitoring, review and revision of the RTW process and individual RTW plans.
- Setting and tracking RTW process performance measures.
- Organizational commitment to continuous improvement:
 - Regular review of the RTW process to identify and act on opportunities for improvement.
- Visible senior management commitment to RTW:
 - Demonstrated through an organization's actions that prioritize the health and well-being of workers.
 - Active participation in the development, implementation, administration, maintenance and promotion of the RTW process, including providing necessary resources to make the RTW process successful.
- Engagement from all levels of the organization in the RTW process.
- Orientation and RTW training strategy for workers and leaders:
 - Providing suitable training for all positions on the RTW process, including expectations and responsibilities.
- Organizational communication about the RTW process:
 - Ongoing, open and transparent communication with all employees regarding the RTW process, including any changes to the RTW process and addressing concerns or questions.
- Fair and consistent application of the RTW process across the organization.
- Flexibility in defining alternative/modified work in individual RTW plans.

