

Early and Safe Return to Work Policy Township of Springwater

Approved: May 31, 2010
Effective: May 31, 2010
Next Review: June 2011

Department: All Departments
Subject: Health & safety, return to work
Policy Number: A09 - EA

A. Policy Statement

It is the intent of the Early and Safe Return to Work Policy for the Township of Springwater to assist in planning and promoting a timely return to work of employees with work related injuries / illnesses.

B. Purpose

The Township will make every reasonable effort to provide temporary modified or suitable alternative duties to a worker who is disabled due to an occupational injury or illness. The goal is to provide injured workers with the opportunity to return to work within their level of ability as soon as possible following the injury / illness.

The Township will comply with all legislative requirements including those of the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*, the Ontario Human Rights Code and the *Employment Standards Act*.

The goal of the Early and Safe Return to Work Policy is to return workers to their pre-injury / illness position in a timely manner. This may be accomplished through temporary modification to the tasks, work environment or working hours. Where modification to the pre-injury / illness position are not possible or appropriate, alternative duties may be sought and used to facilitate the worker's early and safe return to work.

Where a permanent impairment prevents the worker from returning to their pre-injury / illness position, the Township will seek a permanent accommodation for the worker.

C. Scope

This policy applies to all persons employed by the Township including part-time firefighters.

D. Definitions

'Functional Abilities Form' (FAF) for Early Return to Work' is a WSIB form that the health care Professional completes stating the worker's current limitations and capabilities.

'Health Care Professional' includes a medical doctor, chiropractor, physiotherapist and dentist.

'Permanent Impairment' is a disability that a health care Professional advises is not likely to improve significantly over time.

'Sustainable Alternative Work' is work that the worker can do which is consistent with his / her limitations and capabilities and which can be performed without aggravating the injury / illness.

'Temporary Alternative Work' is other suitable work that is provided to a worker for a designated time period to assist in rehabilitation following an injury or illness.

'Temporary Modified Work' is where the worker's regular job is modified for a designated time period to assist in rehabilitation following an injury or illness. The worker is able to perform the essential duties of the job, but some of the other duties are modified to suit the worker's limitations / capabilities.

E. General

This Policy shall be administered by the Manager of Human Resources in collaboration with all departments.

This Policy shall be referred to as the 'Early and Safe Return to Work Policy'.

This Policy shall come into force and effect on the day of passage.

This Policy shall be reviewed annually.

F. Authority

The authority for the Early and Safe Return to Work Policy shall be by the approval of the Township of Springwater Council.

ATTACHMENT A
PROCEDURES FOR THE EARLY AND SAFE RETURN TO WORK POLICY

1. To ensure the success of the Early and Safe Return to Work Program, the worker must return the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board Functional Abilities Form (FAF) to their supervisor immediately after receiving healthcare or prior to their next scheduled shift. Failing to do so could result in loss of wages for lost time as per WSIB legislation.
2. The supervisor will offer suitable work based on the functional abilities information provided by the treating health care Professional. If the healthcare professional has not completed an FAF or the information is incomplete, the supervisor will offer suitable work based on the standard restrictions provided by the WSIB Medical Advisor.
3. The supervisor will complete a modified / alternative work offer immediately upon receiving the functional abilities information.
4. The supervisor should describe the suitable work including tasks associated with the work.
5. The supervisor should indicate the work is available immediately regardless of the return to work date indicated by the healthcare professional.
6. The worker and the supervisor should sign and date the modified / alternative work offer. If the worker refuses to sign, it must be documented in the signature area. A copy should be given to the worker.
7. If the worker reports that he/she will not be returning to work because of an injury / illness, the supervisor should complete the modified / alternative work offer based on the information provided. If the worker leaves a message then the supervisor should contact the worker as soon as possible. It is up to the WSIB adjudicator to determine which date was the most appropriate based on medical information.
8. The modified / alternative work offer should be forwarded immediately to the Manager of Human Resources and it will be forwarded to the WSIB.
9. If the worker is accommodated in alternative work, the supervisor shall notify the Manager of Human Resources.
10. If the worker requires accommodation beyond two weeks, additional FAFs should be provided to the worker. The supervisor should request that the worker have the form completed by a healthcare professional every two weeks.

11. The supervisor must complete a modified / alternative work journal weekly. The supervisor and the worker must sign the bottom of the form. A copy of this form must be forwarded to the Manager of Human Resources – at the end of each week. The Manager of Human Resources shall forward a copy of this form to the Finance Department for payroll and WSIB.
12. For those workers who require physiotherapy appointments and are working reduced hours, every effort should be made to schedule appointments outside of modified work hours. Once the worker returns to full time hours and still requires physiotherapy, every effort should be made to schedule appointments at the beginning or the end of a shift.
13. If a worker's restrictions cannot be accommodated, the supervisor shall contact the Manager of Human Resources for further assistance. The supervisor must stay in weekly contact with the worker.
14. Temporary modified / alternative work will be offered for a limited period of time. In the case where return to regular duties does not occur as expected, the workplace parties will meet to revise and reassess the continuing need for and availability of modified / alternative duties.

ATTACHMENT B ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Employer

The law requires the employer to complete Form 7 within 3 calendar days after learning of the reporting obligation as a result of a work related accident / illness. The completed form has to be received by the WSIB within 7 business days after you learn of your reporting obligation.

Failure to report, or late reporting, will result in a minimum \$250 penalty being charged by the WSIB. A minimum of \$250 can be fined for each infraction.

B. Management

- Be knowledgeable and supportive of the Early and Safe Return to Work Policy
- Ensure that all workers are informed of the Early and Safe Return to Work Policy
- Participate in the promotion and provision of modified / alternative work
- Provide continued support and encouragement to a worker participating in the program
- Participate in the Early and Safe Return to Work Policy meetings as required

C. Supervisor

- Provide the injured/ill worker with the Early and Safe Return to Work Policy package to take to the health care professional at the first opportunity, preferably at initial treatment
- Identify temporary modified or alternative duties where required based on the FAF or standard restrictions
- Meet with the worker and other parties where possible, to discuss the terms of the return to work
- Notify appropriate parties of the worker's return to work (either modified, alternative or full duties) so that the WSIB can be advised

D. Workers

- Take the Early and Safe Return to Work Policy to the healthcare professional
- Return all completed forms to their supervisor as soon as possible preferably the same day as treatment
- Participate and cooperate in the program by maintaining regular personal contact with the supervisor regarding the ability to work, physical capabilities and treatment plans
- Communicate any concerns to the supervisor so that potential problems or concerns are openly addressed in a timely manner