



WORKERS' COMPENSATION MANAGEMENT BUREAU

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

April 10, 2023

April 2023 Safety Tip

Importance of a Return to Work Program

A Return to Work program allows workers who are unable to perform their usual job duties to work in a limited or temporary light-duty capacity.



A safe working environment contributes to an agency's overall success and the well-being of its employees. Preventing injuries from occurring is the primary goal; however, when a workplace injury does occur, agencies must be committed to supporting its employee's and their continued engagement in the workplace.

Return to Work Program

A Return to Work Program is a proactive, comprehensive program for employees with work related injuries and/or illnesses. It provides temporary transitional duty as a bridge back to full normal employment as quickly as medically possible during the healing period. A successful program includes:

- A Return to Work point of contact within each department
- Return to Work efforts start on first day of absence
- Written procedure for returning injured employees to workplace

Program Value

Employees are an agency's most valued asset. Employees rely on each other to get the job done every day. Advantages of getting an employee back to work include:

- Lowers premium costs
- Speeds up recovery time
- Keeps loss of productivity to a minimum
- Encourages communication between employer & injured employee

Employee Benefits

- Provides a sense of job security
- Shifts focus from "dis-ability" to ability
- Keeps the employee active and speeds medical recovery
- Allows employee to continue working, receiving a regular paycheck, maintain health plan eligibility, and continue accruing benefits

Employer Benefits

- Maintaining productivity in the workplace
- Supporting the culture of caring for our employees
- Keeping trained and experienced workers on the job
- Helps reduce the costs associated with workplace injuries or occupational diseases

Having a Return to Work Program is a vital tool for employees and employers. A successful program will assist in limiting the cost of workers' compensation claims and will potentially reduce workers' compensation premium costs. For assistance in setting up a Return to Work Program, contact the Workers' Compensation Management Bureau at wcmb@mt.gov.

Resources

- [OSHA Guidance on Returning to Work](#)
- [Montana State Fund's Return to Work Flow Chart](#)
- [Implementing a Return to Work Program from Montana State Fund](#)

Save the Date: The next [State Safety Group](#) meeting is May 25, 2023.

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