



The **ROLE**
of the
**WORKPLACE
REHABILITATION
PROVIDER**





Please note

This information is for guidance only and is not to be taken as an expression of the law. It should be read in conjunction with the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*, the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Regulations 2001* and any other relevant legislation. Copies of the legislation can be purchased from Print Applied Technology: call (03) 6233 3289 or freecall 1800 030 940. It is also available on the Internet at www.thelaw.tas.gov.au

This guide was produced by staff from WorkCover Tasmania.

We welcome your feedback on this guide.
Send to: wstinfo@justice.tas.gov.au

INTRODUCTION

Workplace rehabilitation is a managed process involving timely intervention with appropriate and adequate services based on assessed need. It is aimed at maintaining injured or ill workers in, or returning them to, suitable employment¹.

A workplace rehabilitation provider is an organisation with the qualifications, experience and expertise to deliver services as part of this process. It helps injured workers return to work by providing expert advice and services in consultation with workers, employers, insurers, treating doctors and other providers, and that are tailored to their specific circumstances.

A workplace rehabilitation provider identifies and addresses the critical physical, psychological, social, environmental and organisational risk factors which may have an impact on a worker's ability to successfully return to work. It achieves this through delivering workplace rehabilitation services.

This guide explains the role and functions of the workplace rehabilitation provider in the injury management process.

¹ NOHSC: 3021 (1995), Guidance notes for Best Practice Rehabilitation Management of Occupational Injuries and Diseases, April 1995.

WHAT IS AN ACCREDITED WORKPLACE REHABILITATION PROVIDER?

The *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (the Act) states that a workplace rehabilitation provider is not to provide workplace rehabilitation services unless the provider has been accredited by the Board.

An accredited workplace rehabilitation provider is an organisation that has been accredited by the WorkCover Tasmania Board (the Board) under section 77C of the Act to provide workplace rehabilitation services.

A workplace rehabilitation provider can only deliver those workplace rehabilitation services that it is accredited for.

WHAT ARE THE FUNCTIONS OF A WORKPLACE REHABILITATION PROVIDER?

Workplace rehabilitation services that are delivered by an accredited provider are:

- // initial workplace rehabilitation assessment
- // assessment of the functional capacity of a worker
- // workplace assessment
- // job analysis
- // advice about job modification
- // rehabilitation counselling
- // vocational assessment
- // advice or assistance with job seeking
- // advice or assistance arranging vocational re-education or retraining.

Workplace rehabilitation does not include:

- // work conditioning
- // treatment (including therapeutic counselling)
- // overseeing/monitoring of an injured worker's treatment
- // determining a worker's ongoing entitlements
- // claims management
- // assessment of daily living.

While providers have the skills to perform some or all of these services, they are not considered workplace rehabilitation services.

HOW TO BECOME AN ACCREDITED WORKPLACE REHABILITATION PROVIDER

The Board has adopted the Heads of Workers Compensation Authorities' Nationally Consistent Approval Framework for Workplace Rehabilitation Providers (the National Framework).

Any organisation seeking to be an accredited workplace rehabilitation provider must submit an application to the Board demonstrating how it will meet the Conditions of Approval of the National Framework.

The Conditions of Approval and the application process are outlined on the WorkCover Tasmania website at www.workcover.justice.tas.gov.au

Once approved, the workplace rehabilitation provider will receive an *Instrument of Approval* that will be valid for up to three years.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

The Conditions of Approval are the overarching requirements that a provider needs to satisfy an application and throughout the life of the Approval. The Conditions of Approval include:

- ▄ the requirements associated with the Principles of Workplace Rehabilitation
- ▄ the Code of Conduct for Workplace Rehabilitation Providers (see below)
- ▄ qualifications
- ▄ performance measures.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR WORKPLACE REHABILITATION PROVIDERS

The Code of Conduct for Workplace Rehabilitation Providers describes the responsibilities and standards of behaviour required of any person or organisation accredited by the Board to provide workplace rehabilitation services.

The Code of Conduct deals with situations where a workplace rehabilitation provider may be unsure of the appropriate course of action. It also acts as a guide to help a provider make responsible decisions.

QUALIFICATIONS OF A WORKPLACE REHABILITATION CONSULTANT

It is a Condition of Approval that a workplace rehabilitation provider has systems for ensuring that its workplace rehabilitation consultants have the minimum qualifications that are eligible for verification.

A workplace rehabilitation consultant will have a qualification that is eligible to be recognised, accredited or registered by one of the following associations or Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency registration boards:

- /// Australian Society of Rehabilitation Counsellors
- /// Rehabilitation Counselling Association of Australia
- /// Australian Association of Occupational Therapists
- /// Physiotherapist Registration Board
- /// Australian Association of Exercise and Sports Science
- /// Psychologists Registration Board
- /// Speech Pathology Australia
- /// Australian Association of Social Workers
- /// Medical Board
- /// Nurses Registration Board

AND 12 months or more experience delivering workplace rehabilitation services.

Where a workplace rehabilitation consultant has less than 12 months experience delivering workplace rehabilitation services, a comprehensive induction program will be completed and professional supervision provided for a least 12 months.

EVALUATING AN APPROVED WORKPLACE REHABILITATION PROVIDER

Following approval, the workplace rehabilitation provider may be required to undergo an on-site evaluation (initiated by the Board) 12 months after the application approval.

During its three years of approval, the workplace rehabilitation provider is required to undertake annual self-evaluations, and may undergo a periodic on-site evaluation and/or exception on-site evaluation initiated by the Board.

The evaluation process and tools will be published at www.workcover.tas.gov.au as they become available.

HOW DOES THE ROLE OF THE WORKPLACE REHABILITATION PROVIDER RELATE TO THE INJURY MANAGEMENT CO-ORDINATOR AND THE RETURN TO WORK CO-ORDINATOR?

As represented in the diagram below, the roles of the Return to Work Co-ordinator, Workplace Rehabilitation Provider and the Injury Management Co-ordinator are separated and undertake different functions. However, they all play a pivotal role in the injury management process, and they complement each other through their commitment and collaboration to achieve a common goal of returning the injured worker to early, safe and sustainable return to work.

Depending on the needs of the organisation, and assuming the person is suitably qualified, experienced and their workload is appropriate, it may be deemed viable for someone to undertake more than one of these roles.



Functions of the Return to Work Co-ordinator

In all cases the Return to Work Co-ordinator provides the injured worker with workplace-based support and assistance throughout the injury management and return to work process by:

- ▀ assisting in developing and implementing timely return to work plans and injury management plans
- ▀ assisting in identifying timely, suitable and meaningful duties
- ▀ assisting the injured worker to carry out their designated duties in a safe and appropriate manner
- ▀ providing the injured worker with moral support in the form of reassurance and encouragement in their treatment and return to work
- ▀ monitoring the injured worker's progress
- ▀ actively promoting injury management and return to work processes and positively influencing worker perceptions
- ▀ providing input into workplace health and safety, and preparing and maintaining injury management programs, such as developing an injury management policy and associated processes (refer to the *Guideline for an Employer Injury Management Program* at www.workcover.tas.gov.au)
- ▀ training and educating line managers, supervisors and workers about injury management and return to work processes
- ▀ assisting in regular monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of workplace injury management programs against outcomes
- ▀ collating and maintaining relevant documentation.

For more information, get your free copy of *The Role of the Return to Work Co-ordinator*. See *Further Resources* on page 11 for details.

Functions of the Injury Management Co-ordinator

An Injury Management Co-ordinator is a person appointed by the insurer or employer. An Injury Management Co-ordinator ensures the injury management process runs smoothly by co-ordinating and planning the injury management process.

This is achieved by ensuring that:

- contact is made with the worker, the employer and the worker's primary treating medical practitioner, as soon practicable after the worker is assigned
- injury management plans and return to work plans for the worker are developed, reviewed, modified and implemented, as agreed with the worker or determined by the Tribunal and in consultation with key parties
- the work capacity of the worker is regularly reviewed and options for the worker's retraining or redeployment are investigated and arranged
- if required, workplace rehabilitation providers are appointed
- the following people are involved in managing the worker's injury and return to work:
 - the worker, the worker's employer and the employer's insurer
 - the primary treating medical practitioner and other treating medical practitioners
- the following people are, if necessary or desirable, involved in managing the worker's injury:
 - workplace rehabilitation providers
 - the Return to Work Co-ordinator
 - supervisors and line managers
 - allied health professionals

- /// medical information is collated
- /// relevant documentation is maintained
- /// attempts are made to resolve any disputes
- /// information on injury management is provided to the worker and the worker's employer.

For more information, get your free copy of *The Role of the Injury Management Co-ordinator*. See *Further Resources* on page 11 for details.

FURTHER RESOURCES

There are other publications available from WorkCover that help explain the processes and people involved:

- *A Guide to Workers Compensation in Tasmania* GB112
- *Application for Approval as a Workplace Rehabilitation Provider* (internet only)
- *Guideline for Developing Return to Work Plans and Injury Management Plans* (internet only)
- *Guideline for Employer Injury Management Policy* (internet only)
- *Heads of Workers Compensation Authorities Guide: Nationally Consistent Approval Framework for Workplace Rehabilitation Providers* (internet only)
- *Injury Management: Making it Work* poster
- *Injury Management: Making it Work* GB197
- *Tasmanian Additional Requirements Form to Operate as Workplace Rehabilitation Provider* (GF180, internet only)
- *The Role of the Injury Management Co-ordinator* GB194
- *The Role of the Primary Treating Medical Practitioner* GB257
- *The Role of the Return to Work Co-ordinator* GB229
- *WorkCover Tasmania Board Assessment Tool for Approval to Work as a Workplace Rehabilitation Consultant* (GF181, internet only).

For your free copies of any of these and other useful guidance material, go to www.workcover.tas.gov.au and search for the code numbers listed above. Alternatively, call WorkSafe Tasmania on 1300 366 322.



1300 366 322 www.worksafe.tas.gov.au

For more information contact
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