

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT 2015

INFORMATION FOR THE EDUCATION SECTOR | AUGUST 2016

TOPIC 8

Injury and Illness Support and Rehabilitation

THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT CAME INTO EFFECT ON 4 APRIL 2016. IT MAKES THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF WORKERS AND WORKPLACES A PRIORITY.

This series of guides provides general information for the Education sector about the different elements of an effective health and safety system.

In these guides, “Boards/ ECEs” refers to school Boards of Trustees, early childhood education (ECE) services and kōhanga reo as entities that meet the definition of Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) under the Act.

These guides draw on information published by WorkSafe New Zealand and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. To keep fully informed about your health and safety obligations, visit WorkSafe’s website:
<http://www.business.govt.nz/worksafe/hswa>

This guide discusses assistance for workers returning to work after suffering injuries or illnesses. It also covers support and rehabilitation, return to work planning and suitable duties for the returning worker.

What is a support and rehabilitation programme?

A support and rehabilitation programme details how the school or ECE service helps workers return to work safely and successfully. It is part of the Board’s/ECE’s health and safety management system.

A successful return to work can be helped by the following factors:

- » ensuring relevant workplace hazards (including psycho-social) are addressed appropriately
- » an effective support and rehabilitation programme
- » an effective return to work plan
- » effective co-operation between the parties involved, which may include the Board/ECE, the ill or injured person’s manager, co-workers, the Health and Safety Representative, ACC, treatment provider and Occupational Health Nurse

The Health and Safety Representative has a specified role under the Act in promoting the interests of workers who have suffered illness or injury at work, including involvement in the arrangements for rehabilitation and return to work.

A support and rehabilitation programme is an important part of the Board’s/ECE’s health and safety management system

What is a return to work plan?

A return to work plan details **actions to be carried out to help a worker return to work** safely after injury or illness.

A return to work plan is **developed in consultation with the Board/ECE**, the ill or injured **worker**, the **Health and Safety Representative and other relevant parties** such as the union representative, the treatment provider, ACC, and the medical insurer.

The plan should include **clear objectives**, a list of **actions** to be taken to enable return to work, and the **person responsible** for each action. It may include:

- » suitable duties being offered including modified or alternative duties
- » hours of work and work breaks (frequency and duration)
- » support, aids or modifications to the workplace
- » special needs or conditions and what will be done to help (e.g. assistance with transport)
- » time frames
- » monitoring and reviewing progress so that problems can be identified and managed early

What are suitable duties?

Suitable duties refer to work that is suited to the worker's current capacity, taking account of their medical condition, age, skills, work experience and their pre-injury or illness employment.

Suitable duties should always be useful work that's valuable to the organisation. They are temporary duties that the returning worker is able to do and will assist their recovery. These duties may be similar to the worker's usual duties, but they don't have to be.

There are two types of suitable duties:

- » modified duties - where the worker's usual duties and/or the equipment they use are adjusted
- » alternative duties - where the worker performs completely different tasks from those they usually do

Suitable duties may also involve other reasonable adjustments, for example:

- » working in a different area
- » working reduced hours
- » varying start and finish times
- » allowing extra or longer work breaks

Remember, the prime objective is to return the worker to their pre- injury or illness status.

**Need further
guidance and
support on
helping ill or
injured workers
return to work?**



www.acc.co.nz/publications/index.htm