

## **Communicating with injured workers: employer guide**

A workplace injury can have a significant impact on a person's life. But an injury to one of your workers can also have an impact on your business. To minimise this impact, try to foster a recover at work culture at your workplace. Regular communication, support and understanding play an important role in ensuring a successful return to work outcome following an injury.

### **Benefits of you communicating with your injured worker**

A supportive and positive approach from you at the time of injury and throughout the rehabilitation process can have a positive impact on recovery and improves the likelihood of a prompt and successful return to work. This in turn reduces the costs of the claim and the impact of the injury on your premium.

Regular communication lets your employee know they are valued and alleviates uncertainty about their job security.

### **Tips for communicating with an injured worker**

Simple actions can go a long way towards helping your employee feel comfortable about returning to work.

- Be empathetic in your communications as this demonstrates you care about the worker's wellbeing
- Make contact as soon as you are aware of an injury, and maintain regular contact throughout the rehabilitation process. It is a good idea to discuss the timing and frequency of contact at the outset to ensure the worker is comfortable. Contacting the worker too frequently could be perceived as prying or placing pressure on the worker to return to work.
- Identify the most appropriate person in your organisation to maintain contact with the injured worker. Ideally this should be someone the injured worker has a level of trust and rapport with. Research has shown injured workers like their supervisors to maintain contact with them following an injury.
- Invite injured workers to meetings or functions that they may be able to attend. Send them newsletters and updates about any announcements while they are unable to work, or a get well card signed by their supervisor and co-workers. This helps them feel valued and maintains a connection with the workplace so they feel more comfortable returning to work.
- If one of your employees has sustained a psychological/psychiatric injury, it is equally important that communication is maintained while they are unable to work. Your WorkCover Customer Advisor will be able to assist with any queries you may have about whether it is an appropriate time to contact your worker.

Some tips to help you prepare for conversations with your injured worker include:

- Remain positive when speaking to your employee, and avoid placing blame about the injury, as negativity can impact on a worker's motivation to return to work
- Focus on things the worker can do, rather than those they can't due to their injury
- Reassure the worker their job is safe, and encourage them to focus on their recovery from injury
- Listen to any concerns raised and address these promptly
- Ask your worker when they feel they could return to work and discuss the suitable duties available
- Tell your worker you look forward to them returning to work.

Simply maintaining contact with your employees while they are unable to work due to injury can help ensure their recovery and return to work is smooth and prompt.

### **More information**

If you have any queries regarding the return to work process for your employees, please contact us on 1300 362 128 to speak with a WorkCover Customer Advisor, or refer to the resources available at [www.workcoverqld.com.au](http://www.workcoverqld.com.au).