

# Employer Return to Work Guide

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## Supporting your worker

By offering suitable duties you will increase the prospect of earlier recovery, which is great news for your worker and your business. Clear, transparent communication also increases the likelihood of a successful return to work. Below we've shared some common questions other employers have when their worker is recovering at work, and on the next page you'll find a checklist to help make communication easier.

## FAQs

### How long until my worker can return to the hours and duties they were doing before?

Recovery is a gradual process and we are guided by the doctor to advise capacity and confirm progress along the way. The medical certificate or suitable duties plan will indicate the estimated time for recovery.

### What happens if they aggravate their injury or illness while they are recovering at work?

If your worker is struggling with their duties, it's important they speak up as soon as possible, so that duties can be adjusted to avoid aggravating their injury. If an aggravation occurs, we review medical information to determine if it's a new claim.

### How can I make sure that they stick to the duties / plan?

It's important to be clear about who'll be checking in with your worker during their recovery. The checklist on the next page will help with this. A balance between monitoring their recovery and avoiding micromanaging will help them understand your commitment to their safety and wellbeing.

### What is my worker's role in this process?

Their role is to [commit to active involvement](#) in rehabilitation, including attending the suitable duties offered when their doctor says its safe, even if the duties are not related to their usual role.

### What happens if my worker can't attend work during their recovery?

If they were fit for suitable duties, but now can't do those duties, they should see a doctor. We'll contact the doctor for guidance. If they have time off work without medical information to support the reason, this isn't usually covered by their WorkCover claim.

### What if they need to attend appointments during agreed working hours?

Your worker should make appointments outside of working hours. If this is not possible, they should discuss this with you and WorkCover to agree on arrangements.

### Who do I contact if I'm concerned about my worker's progress and recovery?

We're here to help – reach out at any time if you feel unsure about the process or have specific concerns about your worker's suitable duties, wellbeing, or recovery.

## Communication checklist

Use this checklist to confirm you, your worker, and key members of your team are clear about their return to work plan.

### STEPS TO SUCCESS



A doctor has signed a medical certificate, or suitable duties plan, and the tasks or restrictions are clear

Your worker and their supervisor are aware of the suitable duties they'll be doing

Consider impacted colleagues – discuss with your worker how much information you will share

Check their workspace is clean, safe and any modifications or ergonomic equipment are ready

Meet with your worker on day one to welcome them back and be available during the day

Share any workplace changes they may have missed while they were away

Discuss timeframes to full return to work (usually found on the medical certificate or suitable duties plan)

Discuss who's monitoring the suitable duties plan, and confirm how and when (e.g. in person or by phone, every day for three days, then weekly)

Confirm who will check in with your worker about their recovery (if different person to above) and decide together how this will happen (e.g. daily or weekly, by phone)

Discuss with your worker what to do if they are unable to work i.e. who they will call and when

Confirm with them that if we encounter any problems, we will work together to find a solution