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COMMUNICATING WITH INJURED WORKERS

Maintaining a connection with an injured worker is an important claim management tool and can help ensure the worker is able to return to work in an early and safe way. Regular contact also keeps the worker connected to the workplace, which can help smooth the return to work process.

Under the *Workers Compensation Act*, employers and workers are required to maintain communication during the worker's period of recovery as part of the return to work process. The Board does not define what it means to maintain communication - what it looks like will likely depend on your specific situation.

Keeping in regular contact can help with the transition back to work. Conversations with the worker can focus on the worker's prognosis - covering matters such as the worker's restrictions, limitations, capabilities, or expected recovery date. This type of communication provides an opportunity to discuss the worker's potential accommodation needs and provides time for these to be implemented prior to the worker's return to the workplace.

Communication with the worker does not always have to center around return to work. Keeping in contact with workers could also include inviting them to meetings or functions that they may be able to attend, or providing them updates about any announcements or interesting developments at work.

Some tips about communicating with injured workers:

- During training, let workers know about the expectation to stay in regular contact in the event of a workplace injury.
- Make sure supervisors and managers understand the requirement for regular and respectful communication between the employer and injured work.
- Establish the expectations on the timing and frequency of contact in the early conversations with the worker who is off work due to injury.

TOOLS YOU CAN USE

WSIB BC has a sample **communication log** in their "Injury Management Road Map" found at:

www.worksafebc.com/en/for-employers/just-for-you/injury-management-work-disability-prevention

WCB PEI also has a sample **communications log** in their "Return to Work: An Employer's Guide." This Guide is not available online. To obtain information on the Guide you can attend one of the WCB's Return to Work training sessions:

Charlottetown - April 11 from 1:00-3:00
Summerside- April 27 from 10:00-12:00

For more information or to register for the WCB's Return to Work sessions call 902-368-5680.

If you have questions regarding communicating with an injured worker, feel free to contact the OEA at 902-368-6132.