

Strategies for Implementing a Stay at Work/Return to Work Program

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How would you define a...

RETURN TO WORK PROGRAM?

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QUESTION

*What is the goal/purpose of Stay
at Work/Return to Work
Programs?*

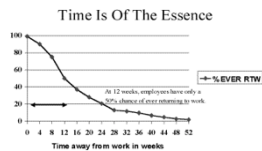
In other words, why have one?

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Goal

Facilitate restoration of physical & mental health of injured/ill employees by helping them reintegrate into workplace as soon as medically possible & **minimize** negative impact of illness/injury on employee/workplace/organization





Source: Jennifer Christian, "Reducing Disability Days: Healing More Than the Injury," Journal of Workers Compensation, Winter 2000



Negative Impact

Employee Costs

- Lost income
- Lost value & skills
- Delayed recovery
- Emotional isolation & depression

Employer Costs

- Lost productivity
- Higher workers' comp & associated benefits
- No control in process
- Salary indemnification exposure
- Permanent loss of worker



True or False?

Costs of a workplace injury in a workplace w/o SAW/RTW Program are likely to be higher than costs in workplace with RTW/SAW Program



Reduction in Costs

- In 2012, Canadians missed an average of 9.3 days from work due to disability
- Total disability costs per full time employee \$9,672 - \$22,920 annually
- *Integrated Disability Management Programs can reduce disability costs by 19% - 25% & employee benefits costs by 15% - 35%*



Critical to Successful Implementation

Senior Management Buy-in & Support

- ROI must be proven
- Reduces lost time
- Required by regulations
- Right thing to do
- Protect investment in work force



Long-Term Focus

Improves retention as it benefits all stakeholders

- Closes T/O back door
- Focuses on what employee "can do" versus what he/she "cannot do"

Complements Strategic Health & Wellness Initiatives

- Shift emphasis away from cost & risk management to employee health as investment in company's future
- Increases time @ work, productivity, employee satisfaction, perceived fairness

RTW is process that goes beyond "work resumption"

- Shifts attention from duration (of off work) to durability & sustainability of work after RTW event
- Moves past separation of those working from those out of work to include transitioning employees

Seven Principles

1. Workplace has strong commitment to health & safety
2. Employer makes offer of modified work (work accommodation)
3. RTW planners ensure RTW/SAW plan supports returning worker w/o disadvantaging co-workers & supervisors
4. Supervisors trained in work disability prevention & included in RTW/SAW planning
5. Employer makes early & considerate contact with injured/ill worker
6. Someone responsible to coordinate RTW/SAW
7. Employers & health care providers communicate about workplace demands & with worker's consent

Team Approach

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graph TD
    Employee[Employee] --> WorkSafe[WorkSafe BC Representative]
    Employee --> Company[Company Representative]
    WorkSafe <--> Physician[Employee's Physician/Health Professionals]
    Company <--> Labour[Labour Representative]
    Physician <--> Labour
  
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Communication Plan

Objectives

- SAW/RTW Program shall be communicated to all employees within organization
- Management & employees are expected to support & fully comply with policy & implementation of policy & process

Communication Methods

- Employee Orientation Program
- Staff/department/team meetings
- One-on-one discussions
- Tool box talks
- Employee newsletter
- Health & safety Newsletters
- Safety Talks
- Posters/memos on Bulletin Boards
- Email/hard copy messages
- Notes on pay stubs
- Intranet/website

How to Implement a RTW/SAW Program

Integration & Communications

- Interactive planning leading to reasonable solutions
- Timeliness of response to impaired worker
- Centralized team able to work with all lost time cases
- Builds positive communication with impaired employees
- Creates reasonable & accurate expectations

Professional Knowledge

- Engages right people with correct solutions
- Invites supervisor input with resulting support
- Reduced costs for all parties – provided real, usable data
- Creates specific written guidelines for all to follow
- Supports evidence-based medical practices



Consistency & Fairness

- Prevents discrimination – demonstrates caring
- Meets needs of impaired employee
- Provides flexibility to work on a case by case basis
- Covers all employees with a lost time claim
- Saves sick leave for real medical emergencies



Key Components

Guiding Principles	Objectives	Process	Roles & Responsibilities	Measures of Success
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Preview of Microsoft Word - SAW/RTW Template - Final - 2017 (2).docx

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NAME HERE
CITY OF VANCOUVER TO BE USED FOR PRESENTATION

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SAW/RTW Company Policy

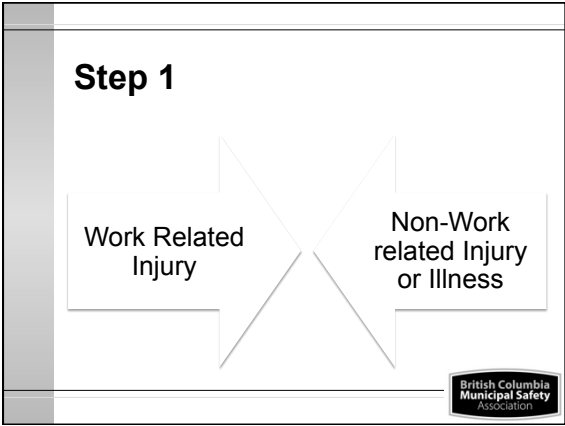
- Formal statement of intent - as per other written employment/HR policies
- Defined based on company values & overall approach to employee relations
- Ensures fair treatment for any injured or ill employees – identifies consistent process to be followed

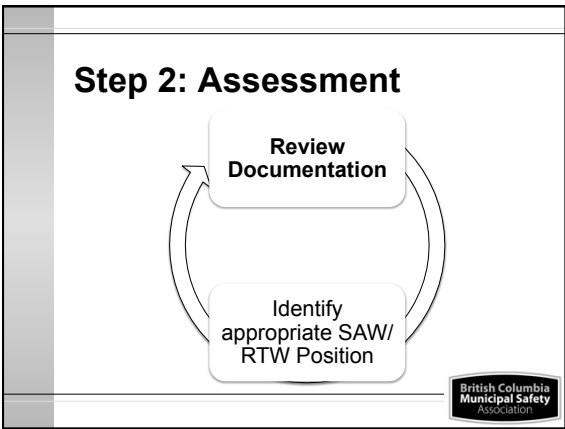
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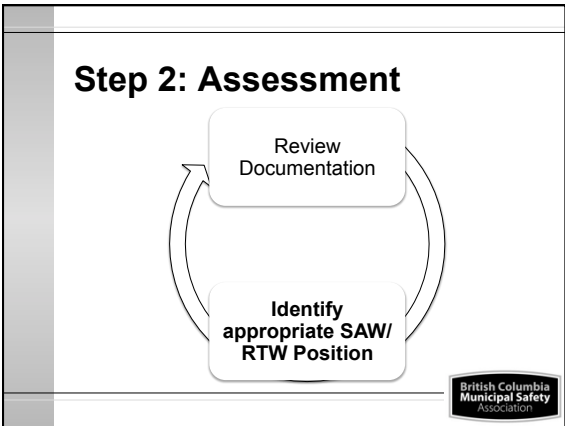
Steps in SAW/RTW Process

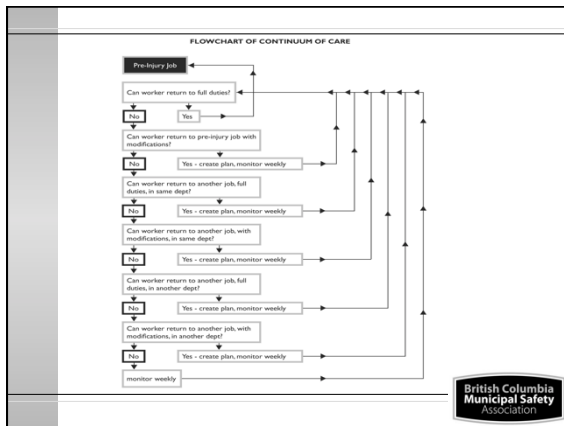
- STEP 1 Initial Injury/Accident Reporting
- STEP 2 Assessment
- STEP 3 Define SAW/RTW Plan
- STEP 4 Implement SAW/RTW Plan
- STEP 5 Return to Full Duty

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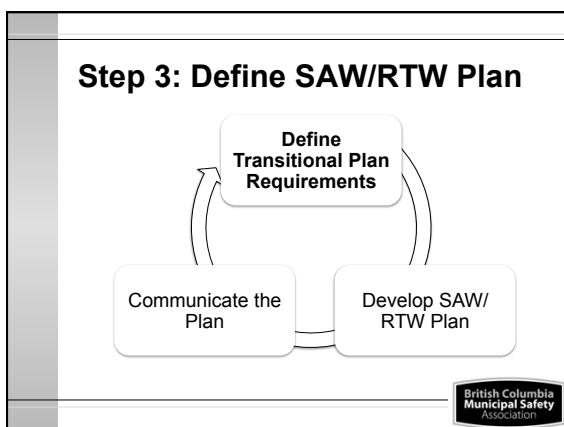








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Transitional Plan Requirements

- **Goals of Plan**
 - Milestones employee should be able to achieve
- **Details of Modifications**
 - Modifications/adjustments to employee's work schedule
 - Modifications/adjustments to employee's method of performance including provision of light duties
- **Timeframe for progress & restrictions**
- **Performance expectations in temporary position**
- **Follow-up schedule**



Modifications to Pre-Injury/ Illness Position

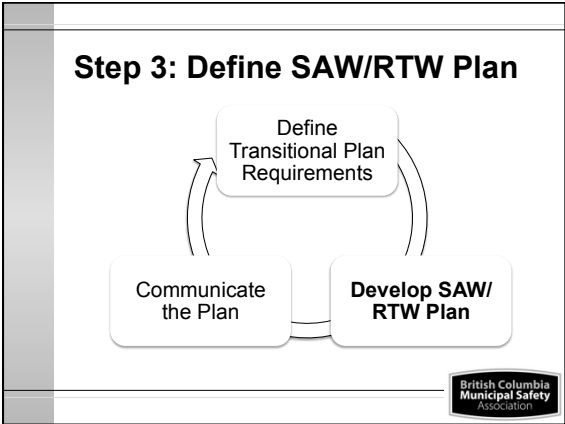
- **Modified or light duty**
 - Employee continues performance of all essential functions of pre-injury/Illness position with modifications to work schedule and/or method of performance
 - Employee may perform only a portion of assigned duties w/ current capabilities
 - Work must be safe & productive

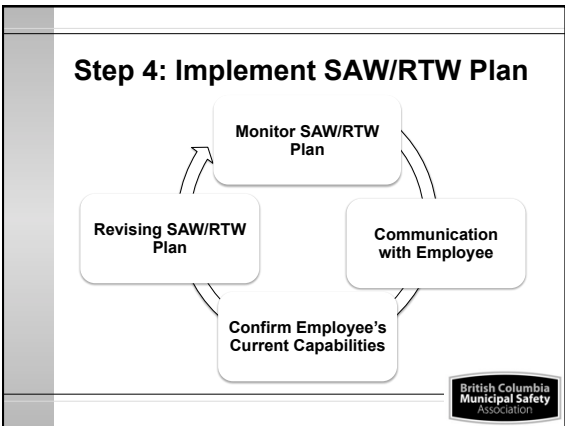


Placed in different Position

- May also be modifications and/or adjustments to employee's work schedule or duties
- Typically for specific limited time period
- Example:
 - Firefighter performs fire inspection duties during period of recovery







Implementation

<p>Monitor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure employee is performing in accordance with Plan & medical guidance • Supervisor assumes responsibility for practical application of Plan • Monitor & report employee attendance & performance 	<p>Communicate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage employee during recuperation from injury • Communicate value of employee to organization & department • Encourage return to full work at earliest possible date • Determine employee's special needs organization can help with
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Implementation

Confirm Current Capabilities

- Employee has primary responsibility
 - Inform of changes to medical situation & impact on Plan
- Upon request, physician provides updates as to employee's current capabilities & progress

Revise Plan

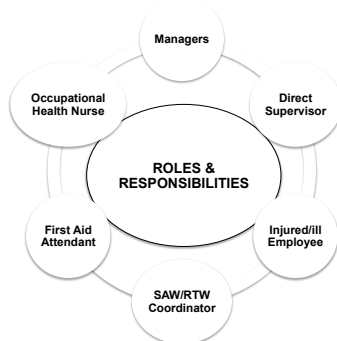
- Based on operational constraints and/or changes to employee's ability and/or medical situation



Step 5: Return to Full Duty

Indicates employee is capable of performing all essential + non-essential functions of pre-injury/illness position





Tracking & Measurement

Tracking

- Injury Description
- Injury Frequency Rates
- Injury Severity Rates
- Number of SAW/RTW Plans initiated

Measures of Success

- Changes in lost work days, lost time claims, indemnity & medical costs
- # of days of modified duty or transitional work



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