

In a global economy Health & Safety and Return-to-Work programs not only help employers to remain competitive, but also help workers to remain employed.

## Return-to-Work Program Samples

A Return-to-Work program may be introduced in large or small organizations. Large companies may be able to devote more resources to the program, but smaller companies can customize many of the features to meet their needs.

### Essential Elements for All Return-to-Work Programs

- Set up a list of clear steps to follow after an injury has occurred;
- Set up lines of communication among health care providers, management, and the union;
- Set up a contact schedule to monitor the progress and needs of the injured worker;
- Evaluate and enhance the Return-to-Work program on a regular basis;
- Present the Return-to-Work program as part of a benefit package;
- Identify some Return-to-Work opportunities before they are needed;
- Be positive and flexible: focus on capabilities rather than disabilities;
- Use videos in job modification, workplace redesign, rehabilitation efforts, and other reasonable accommodation procedures;
- Promote a cooperative environment;
- Maintain contact with all partners;
- Make sure the Return-to-Work tasks are appropriate for the injured worker's capabilities; and
- Have the injured worker assist in identifying suitable work.
- Included in the Return-to-Work model are several sample programs that were generously shared with us by several employers. These are in-place, working programs from companies large and small and in various types of businesses and industries. The programs are included as examples that may provide some ideas that may be appropriate to your company.

See: *Appendix Y – Comprehensive Return-to-Work Model*  
*Appendix Z– Return to Work Model Program*  
*Appendix AA – Return to Work Model Program*  
*Appendix BB – Return to Work Model Program*

## **Return to Work Program**

This program is to minimize the production lost by the company and wages lost by the employee as a result of temporary partial incapacity resulting from on the job injury. It is the express intent to provide modified duty within the employee's restrictions whenever possible and to facilitate the employees full rehabilitation as rapidly as possible.

The Human Resources Director is primarily responsible for administration of this procedure.

- I. Notification of Restriction
  - A. Human Resources will be notified that an employee has been injured.
  - B. Copy of completed Treatment Report will be furnished to Human Resources immediately after treatment; if after office hours, a copy will be left in the Supervisor's office and furnished to Human Resources the next business morning.
  - C. In the event the injured employee cannot return to the facility due to hospitalization or similarly severe prescribed restriction, Human Resources will obtain required information directly from the medical resources.
  - D. The Treatment Report is the primary document to capture the treating physician's restrictions. Additional clarification or modification of restriction may be provided on other documents; however, a Treatment Report will be taken by the employee to all medical appointments (except physical therapy).
  - E. Restrictions addressed by this policy must be identified by a medical doctor or other state licensed practitioner of the healing arts.
- II. Identification of Modified Duty Job Assignment(s)
  - A. In cases where an employee's restrictions preclude performing his pre-injury job (or particular aspect of the job), every reasonable effort will be made to identify or create a productive job assignment which will accommodate temporary restrictions as identified by the treating physician.
    1. This accommodation may include providing intermittent assistance or relief in dealing with one or more elements of the employees "regular" (pre-injury) job.
    2. Accommodation may also include arrangements for less than an eight hour work day (in such cases, hours not worked will be accumulated and submitted to the worker's compensation insurance carrier).
    3. Every effort will be made to place the employee in the most productive assignment available; direct labor categories will be preferred over indirect.
    4. The modified duty job assignment will be made by the Human Resources Director after consultation with production management.
  - B. The modified duty job assignments will be recorded on the Restricted Job Description, to be completed by Human Resources prior to or coincidental with the employee's return to work.
    1. The Description will be acknowledged by the employee, supervisor, union representative and the Human Resources Director. Each will be provided a copy of the completed document.
    2. The Description may be revised or reissued based on change in the employee's restrictions. The Description will expire 90 days after last authorization or when employee is released without restrictions.

3. It is the Supervisor's explicit responsibility not to assign any work to the employee which is contrary to the identified restrictions. The employee has an explicit responsibility not to attempt any task which may exceed his identified restrictions. Any difficulties experienced by the employee within his restrictions will be reported to Human Resources for review with treating physician.
4. Any questions or controversy as to an employee being restricted from performing specific task(s) will be brought to the immediate attention of the Human Resources Director for resolution.
5. The Human Resources Director will notify all parties when the employee has been fully released for unrestricted duty.

C. Wages and Related Considerations

1. The employee will continue to receive his/her pre-injury wage, plus any general increases, for all hours worked in a restricted capacity.
2. The employee will be paid per C.1 for hours less than his/her scheduled shift lost due to company arranged examinations, treatment and therapy.
3. The employee may not bid on any posted job openings while in a restricted capacity.
4. The employee will be shown on the weekly schedule as "restricted."
5. Since he will "follow the work" within restrictions, normal shift scheduling practices may not be possible.

## RESTRICTED DUTY JOB DESCRIPTION

**Position: Modified Duty** \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

**General Description:** Performs restricted duty assignments within the weight and/or physical limitations prescribed by a provider. Employee must be eligible to receive workers' compensation benefits and must have medical release for restricted duty.

**Responsibilities/Examples of Work:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Special Limitations:** The provider's release attached is made a part of this light duty job description, and is to be strictly followed. Failure to follow any portion of these descriptions will be considered a violation of work rules and may result in disciplinary action. Any questions regarding the appropriateness of a work assignment must be brought to the immediate attention of Human Resources.

**Specific Restrictions:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ lb. lifting restriction
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**Time Limit:** The **Restricted Duty** job description is effective until the employee's next visit to the provider. It may be extended based on the provider's report, however extensions may not exceed ninety (90) days without authorization by Human Resources.

I have read and understand the terms and conditions of the Restricted Duty Job Description. If I have questions I will ask my Supervisor; any differences in interpretation will be brought to the attention of Human Resources.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee: \_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Union: \_\_\_\_\_  
Human Resources: \_\_\_\_\_

Dr. Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

With: \_\_\_\_\_

## Return to Work Policy

It is the purpose of this policy to provide guidelines for administering a modified duty program. This program is necessary to limit the amount of lost workdays an injured or ill employee may incur by providing meaningful work of a restricted or limited nature. The program objectives should prevent the unnecessary loss of work time for valuable employees and help maintain continuity of departmental operations to the maximum extent possible.

### Definitions:

#### Restricted Duty

Duties assigned to an injured or industrially ill employee which enable the employee to retain his/her current status with some limited restrictions and with the company being able to make a reasonable accommodation of full duties.

#### Alternate Duty

Duties assigned to an injured or industrially ill employee which require the employee to transfer to another job position or department on a temporary basis.

#### Work Related

Any injury or illness which occurs while performing assigned job duties.

### Responsibilities:

#### Injured Employee

1. Have any or all specific job-related restrictions approved by company designated physicians, as necessary.
2. Report all job-related restrictions to the Safety Director and your immediate Supervisor.
3. Keep both the Safety Director and immediate Supervisor informed of any change in job-related restrictions.
4. Adhere to all medical advice and directives as prescribed by your treating physician, nurse, or other medically qualified professional.
5. Question any medical directives which you may not understand.
6. Do NOT perform any activity which is not in accord with your job-related restrictions, both on and off the job.
7. Employees must be re-evaluated by a company designated physician within 30 days of their last examination to determine whether their modified duty status should be continued.

NOTE: Failure to adhere to any work-related restrictions may result in disciplinary action.

#### Supervisors

1. Insure all employees with job-related restrictions are adhering to their restrictions as noted on the modified duty form.
2. Assign employees with job-related restrictions to jobs which can accommodate their restrictions. If no jobs are available within your department, contact the Human Resources Department and/or the Safety Director to discuss options or arrange for departmental transfer.
3. Compile and maintain a list of departmental job duties that meet light duty requirements. List to be given to Human Resource/Safety Department.

#### Human Resources/ Safety Department

1. Arrange for temporary work assignment of modified duty employees where no work is available within the employee's regular department.
2. Contact all Company designated physicians and inform them of our modified duty policy. Provide periodic updates and any change of status relating to the modified duty program.
3. Schedule all employees re-evaluations as noted in the "Injured Employees Responsibilities" number seven.

## Guidelines

1. Restricted duty employees will be compensated at their designated base rate for a period not to exceed 4 weeks for work-related injuries. For non-work related injuries, the employee will be compensated at the rate of pay, by contract, for the job he/she is performing. After 4 weeks, the Human Resources/Safety Department will determine the rate of pay for the job being performed. At no time will the rate of pay be less than labor rate per contract.
2. Alternate duty employees, with a work related injury, will be compensated at their designated base rate for a period not to exceed 4 weeks. For non-work related injury, the employee will be compensated at labor rate per contract. After 4 weeks, the Human Resources/ Safety Department will determine the rate of pay for the job being performed. At no time will the rate of pay be less than labor rate per contract.
3. Job availability for work related injuries will take precedence over non-work related injuries.
4. The company shall make every effort to bring people back to work as long as this person can not cause any harm to themselves, others, or company property.
5. A non-work related injured employee may continue on a modified duty job for a period 4 weeks. After this time, they may be placed on or returned to sick leave at the company's discretion.
6. Whether an employee should be continued on modified duty due to a work related injury or illness shall be at the discretion of the company.
7. NO alternate duty employee will be permitted to work overtime.
8. People on modified duty may be assigned to work on any shift at the discretion of the company.
9. Any person who is unable to report for work due to an injury or industrial illness must check in with the company at least once per week. This person shall contact the Human Resources/Safety Department to verify there has or has not been a change in their status as to coming back to work.  
  
Non Work related injury/illness - Human Resources  
Work related injury/illness - Safety Director
10. The company maintains the right to assign employees on modified duty to any job, within the plant, that will not exceed their restrictions and they are capable of doing.

## **Return to Work Policy**

ABC company has implemented a Return to Work Modified Duty Work Program for employees injured at work. The purpose of this program is to return an injured employee to work as soon as possible following an injury. This keeps the employee in their normal routine of working and allows the employee to be productive in some manner. Ideally an injured employee can gradually progress back to their full time position.

Modified duty job tasks are determined by the restrictions placed on an employee by their physician. To avoid re-injury only those tasks within the limitations must be performed by the injured employee.

Panel physicians are made aware of our programs and are encouraged to cooperate with ABC Company, for a smooth and safe return to work. Non-panel physicians treating employees with work related injuries shall be notified by mail to define our Return to Work Modified Duty Policy.

Upon returning to work a conference should be held with the Safety Manager, the employee's immediate supervisor, and the injured employee. The purpose of this conference is to ensure all parties involved are aware and understand the modified duties to be performed. A "Modified Duty Job Description" form shall be signed by all attending the conference and posted as a result. Also a daily "Modified Duty Sign-off" form will be provided to the employee. The injured employee shall be asked to sign the form following their daily shift in order to ensure ABC Company has provided a modified duty job and the employee has followed his/her physician's restrictions.

## Modified Duty Job Description

Position: Modified Duty \_\_\_\_\_  
Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

### General Description

Perform modified duty assignments within the weight and/or physical limitations prescribed by a physician, for a limited period of time. Employee must be eligible to receive Workers Compensation and must have a medical release for light duty work.

### Responsibility/Examples of Work

### Special Limitations

The Physician's Return to Work Evaluation, attached, is made a part of this light duty job description and is to be strictly followed. Failure to follow any portion of this light duty job description will be considered a violation of work rules and may result in disciplinary action.

### Special Restrictions

1. \_\_\_\_\_lb. Lifting restriction
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

### Time Limit

This Modified Duty job description is effective until the employee's next visit to the physician. It may be extended based on the physician's report, however, extensions may not exceed ninety (90) days without authorization by \_\_\_\_\_. Upon expiration of the time limit, the employee must have a medical release before returning to regular duties.

I have read and understand the terms and conditions of this Light Duty Job Description. If I have questions I will ask my Supervisor.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Employee: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Administration: \_\_\_\_\_

### Light Duty Approved Until Next Doctor's Examination:

Next Dr. Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_ With: \_\_\_\_\_

Next Dr. Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_ With: \_\_\_\_\_

Next Dr. Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_ With: \_\_\_\_\_

### Modified Duty Sign Off Sheet

My signature acknowledges that all restrictions concerning the modified duty job I have been working have been adhered to by myself and ABC Company.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Modified duty job: \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Signature	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
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## Return to Work Program

**Purpose:** To provide temporary, modified-duty for members who are partially disabled due to work-related injuries. Every effort will be made to assist the member to return to his/her former position. We will cooperate with the member, the physician, the therapist and any rehabilitation personnel involved in the case.

Scope: XYZ Company will provide **temporary transitional duty** whenever possible for a period of 120 calendar days to determine the degree of improvement. An extension in excess of 120 days may be allowed on a case-by-case basis, when recovery is incomplete. Such extensions will be reviewed every 30 calendar days thereafter and modified work may continue to be provided in cases where improvement continues.

If a member does not demonstrate progress in their recovery through the modified duty program, the program will be reevaluated utilizing the team approach and possibly discontinued as with any other ineffective medical treatment.

Program Coordinator. The Health/Safety Manager will coordinate the return-to-work modified duties with the injured worker, the supervisor and other team members.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To allow the member to remain in the work force and resume productive employment as soon as possible in his/her normal classification.
2. To enable the worker to gradually overcome his/her limitations through a transitional period of modified-duty, work reconditioning assignments.

### TYPE OF WORK

1. All departments at XYZ Company will cooperate in every way possible to provide regular duties on a limited basis, modified duty and/or special assignments for the disabled member. Whenever possible, attempts will be made to allow the member to remain in his/her classification with modified duties.
2. Some of the following special assignments and/or modified duties in addition to regular duties might include:
  - Rework (sort rejected parts)
  - Clerical work
  - Visitor escort
  - Label and file samples
  - Errands in company vehicle
  - Light janitorial duties
  - Engage in physical reconditioning program
  - Inventory recorder
  - Log and maintain quality records
  - Painting tools
  - Library filing
  - Operate photocopy machine
3. The XYZ Company Occupational Health Nurse will supervise all members undergoing rehabilitation and/or modified duty. When these members are assigned to their regular departments, they will report to the supervisor in that department under the direction of the Occupational Health Nurse. Members undergoing rehabilitation who are not working in their regular departments will be given assignments by the Occupational Nurse.
4. On evening, night shifts and weekends, modification of job duties may be made at any time by the supervisor of a member who has reported an injury, until the member sees the Occupational Health Nurse or sees a practitioner on the Workers Compensation panel of providers.

### SUPERVISION

Unless on a specific errand, members undergoing rehabilitation will have the same obligation to remain at their designated work station as any other member.

#### DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENTS

1. The XYZ Company notification policy regarding doctor's appointments will also apply to members undergoing rehabilitation. If the member requires follow-up treatment or a doctor's appointment which cannot be scheduled during his/her non-working time, the Company shall compensate the member for any straight-time lost from work due to said treatment or appointment; provided that the member must have given the Company prompt prior notice that such treatment or appointment could not be scheduled during non-working time, in which case the Company shall have the right to attempt to change the member's treatment or appointment to non-working time and, if able to do so, the member shall not be entitled to compensation if the employee chooses nevertheless to keep the treatment or appointment on working time.
2. The provisions of the agreement between I.U.E. Local 631 and XYZ Company apply to all modified duty and/or rehabilitation assignments.

# Suggestions for Effective Communication with the Medical Community

## Communication is Crucial

Your ability to communicate effectively with your medical community is crucial to the success of the Return-To-Work Program. For your program to be successful, the following goals must be achieved:

- **Immediate Return of Injured Employees to Transitional or Regular Employment:** Nationally, millions of dollars each year are wasted by employers paying time lost to employees who could actually go back to transitional or even regular duty within 24 hours of injury. This money could be saved if, at the time of injury, the medical provider was given a detailed description of the injured employee's job, or alternate tasks the employee could perform while recovering.
- **Rapid Progression from Transitional to Regular or Other Permanent Employment:** Time-lost and related expenses can be dramatically reduced when frequent, ongoing provider contact moves injured employees as quickly as possible through transitional employment to regular or permanently modified employment.
- **Efficient Determination of Reasonable Accommodation Alternatives:** If an employee will not be able to return to regular employment due to permanent or long-lasting limitations, significant dollars can be saved by quickly evaluating and (when appropriate) implementing permanent job accommodations, including internal transfers when feasible.

## The Key to Working With The Medical Community

To achieve good communication with providers and to ensure the rapid return to work of your employees, you need to provide providers with good information about your Transitional Employment work assignments.

### How Can You Get Your Medical Community To Cooperate With Your Return-To-Work Program?

The success of your Return-To-Work Program can only be ensured when your medical community:

- **Understands** your commitment to facilitating rapid return of injured employees to transitional and/or permanent employment;
- **Understands** that your commitment is to your employees, not just to dollar savings;  
**Understands** exactly how each step of your plan works; and
- **Anticipates** your active participation in the recovery and return to work of each of your injured employees.

The Key Elements To Provider Cooperation Are:

1. **Education** of the medical community; and
2. **Frequent contact** with its members.

See: *Appendix CC: Steps for Obtaining Cooperation From The Employee's Medical Provider*  
*Appendix DD: Troubleshooting Guide*

## STEPS FOR OBTAINING COOPERATION FROM THE EMPLOYEE'S MEDICAL PROVIDER

### STEP 1      **Create and prioritize a list of all key providers in your medical community:**

- List all providers who have treated your employees over the past 3 to 5 years.
- Prioritize this list according to the total number of employees treated by each provider during this time.
- Utilize your Workers' Compensation Provider Panel.

### STEP 2      **Develop and Implement an Education Strategy for Each Key Health Care Provider:**

At this point you should, if possible, devise a specific strategy to develop a relationship with and educate each health care provider. You may use the same strategy for all practitioners or you may develop different strategies for each key health care provider. Consider the following:

- **Face-To-Face Meetings:** Schedule individual face-to-face meetings with practitioners to (a) develop relationships, (b) dispel any previous negative impressions, and (c) discuss and/or drop off materials summarizing your company's Return-To-Work Program.
- **Professional Meetings:** Address Professional Association meetings that key practitioners may attend. Use the same basic strategy for individual meetings. Explain the *mechanics* of your Return-To-Work Program. Remember, it is most important to clearly communicate the *philosophy* of the program.
- **Personal Correspondence:** If you cannot arrange to meet practitioners, try a personal letter (not a form letter). The letter should communicate your interest in meeting with the practitioner personally. As an attachment, be sure to provide a brief description of your company's Return-To-Work Program, or at least a statement of philosophy. Ensure that the practitioner knows that your company's Return-To-Work Program is not "business as usual."
- **Follow-Up Calls and Thank-You Letters:** Part of your education strategy could include a brief phone call preceding important letters sent to a practitioner. This phone call builds rapport, and may provide the necessary context for an important letter requiring the provider's response. Practitioners also generally appreciate a brief call or a thank-you note at the conclusion of a difficult case.

### STEP 3      **Develop Sample Documents Explaining Your Company's Return-To-Work Program:**

There are numerous occasions when a concise and professional description of the Return-To-Work Program will be of value. Rather than developing an intimidating all-inclusive document, it would be preferable to create a series of freestanding one-page documents, each briefly describing a key concept.

### STEP 4      **Develop Sample Letters for Communicating with Doctors:**

Unfortunately, many letters written to medical practitioners ask the wrong questions.

## TROUBLESHOOTING GUIDE

There will be times when you have difficulty dealing with specific members of your local medical community. What follows are some common problems and some approaches to dealing with those providers.

### 1. **The provider refuses to talk with your Company about an injured employee's ability to perform regular or transitional employment. What do you do now?**

It is difficult to understand why some providers will refuse to discuss releases to regular or transitional employment. It may be that the provider is harboring some anger about a past conflict, or perhaps simply misunderstands your intention. There is a basic process to go through when dealing with providers who seem uncooperative. The general process is as follows:

- Call the provider directly and talk with him or her about your concerns and about what your goals are for injured/ill employees.
- If you cannot reach the provider directly, contact the provider's nurse, case manager, or assistant to arrange either a telephone conference or a meeting with the doctor to discuss a case.
- If you are still unsuccessful, contact the Clinic Administrator or someone else who is connected with your *Posted Panel of Providers* and arrange a telephone conference or direct meeting with provider.
- While awaiting a response, you may also want to send information to the provider about your company's Return-To-Work Program.
- Enlist the assistance of your dedicated Claims' Specialist.

### 2. **The provider refuses to release your employee to any kind of work until he or she has fully recovered from the injury. What do you do now?**

There may be any number of reasons for a provider to react this way, including a fear of employee re-injury or perhaps a long-term paternal relationship with the employee. Whatever the reason, the proper response is to follow the steps described above under No. 1, and to call or meet with the provider directly. The goal is to be sure that the provider knows you mean the worker no harm and view gradual return to work as therapeutic.

### 3. **The provider appears to ask the injured employee what he or she can do physically, rather than making an independent decision about physical capacities. What do you do now?**

Frequently, providers are at a loss to determine what an employee actually can do physically. Sometimes they have no idea what the employee's job involves, or the providers may simply feel they have no way to objectively measure a worker's physical capabilities. One potential solution:

- Contact the provider personally and arrange an in-person meeting if possible.
- When contact is achieved with the provider, make every attempt to understand the provider's perspective. Your Claims Specialist may be able to suggest where an Independent Medical Examination can be obtained or where an employee may be sent for a Functional Capacities Evaluation. In many cases, this will address the provider's concerns, while providing you with the needed information to proceed.

### 4. **The provider believes your Company is not working in the injured employee's best interest. What do you do now?**

There are many situations that can result in a provider being skeptical about the intentions of an employer. For example, a provider may be suspicious of an employer's actions if his or her previous experience was negative. Frequently, a provider has had no direct contact with an employer for many years. The proper response is to follow the basic contact process described in No. 1, and then sit down with the provider and discuss at some length the intentions of your company relative to the injured employee. It is very important that you meet face-to-face so that the provider has a real person to visualize when he or she is thinking about you as an employer.

**5. The health care provider seems to be providing unreasonable or unnecessary treatment for a work injury or illness. What do you do now?**

The reasonableness or necessity of all treatment provided by a health care provider under the Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation Act may be subject to prospective, concurrent, or retrospective utilization review at the request of an employee, employer, or workers' compensation insurer. A utilization review request may be filed on a form that can be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, Bureau of Workers' Compensation. Remember, the utilization review process is only available for treatment provided under the Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation Act.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. What are the financial benefits to an employee for early return to work after an injury?

For many injured workers, workers' compensation benefits alone are insufficient to replace lost wages. Returning to work in sustained employment, therefore, is probably the best way for injured workers to avoid significant financial losses. In addition, scientific evidence shows that returning to medically suitable modified-duty work aids healing and recovery. Many obstacles, however, hinder successful and sustained returning to work, including communication problems and financial disincentives of important stakeholders in the workers' compensation system.

### 2. What strategies are suggested for ensuring the high quality of modified-duty jobs?

To ensure that jobs for injured workers are rewarding and fulfilling, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Increase information and resources for employers and employees about these positions and how to design them.
- Include the injured worker in the negotiations.
- Develop written job descriptions that include worker input.
- Allow enough time for discussion, interaction, and negotiation.
- Develop methods for following up on individual plans and avenues of recourse if a plan is not followed.
- Create a position for a "worker advocate" (possibly a nurse or nurse practitioner), who would have early involvement in the case.

### 3. What efforts are recommended for employers to assist injured workers to return to sustained employment?

Efforts to help injured workers return to sustained employment include the following steps:

- Injured worker's signs and symptoms: The injured worker describes his or her experience with the injury, including subjective symptoms such as pain, and sometimes shows objective signs of injury.
- Treating provider's diagnosis, treatment plan, and work restrictions: The treating provider interviews and examines the injured worker, makes a diagnosis, determines necessary treatment, and specifies work restrictions.
- Employer's efforts to correct hazards and accommodate injured workers: The employer encourages reporting of injuries, corrects safety problems, and provides accommodations to allow the injured worker to work safely while recovering and to work with accommodations permanently if necessary.
- Claims administrator paying for necessary health care services: The claims administrator promptly authorizes and pays for necessary health and medical evaluation services.

### 4. There are many parties involved in what is often a complex workers' compensation system. How can we better sort out the responsibilities of these various parties, eliminating some of the confusion and/or distrust that seem to exist?

There are many perceptions, viewpoints, beliefs and disagreements that often contribute to some level of confusion and/or misinformation in the workers' compensation system. A proven way to help dispel misunderstandings and to clarify roles and responsibilities is to develop and disseminate informational materials that define procedures, roles and expectations of the various persons involved. Parties most frequently involved in the workers' compensation system include:

Claims Administrators	Third-Party Administrators
Self-Insured Employers	Self-Administered Employers
Treating Physicians	Panel/non-panel Health Care Providers
Qualified Medical Evaluators	Rehabilitation Counselors
Case Managers	Injured Workers

Developing and distributing communications which describe the roles of these and other parties, and, where appropriate the contact information, can greatly help employees and injured workers understand what a particular individual or group's duties and responsibilities are.



For a Return-to-Work program to be successful, it is important that, prior to being injured, an employee know the process that will be initiated, the roles of those within the process, and his or her responsibilities within the process. This structured and planned process allows the injured worker to concentrate on his/her rehabilitation.

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