

How does offering suitable duties benefit my business?

Employer resource



Watch the video

Helping your worker to get back after an illness or injury at work is an important part of their recovery.

Finding jobs or tasks your worker can do while they're recovering is a great way to support them as they get back to work. Offering this type of meaningful lighter work – also known as suitable duties – is good for your business. Not only that, it's also an obligation in Queensland.

Benefits of offering suitable duties:

- You get to retain your worker's valuable skills and experience, which can help reduce staff turnover, saving on hiring and training costs.
- Keeps your team strong and builds a supportive culture.
- Workers who are actively engaged at work during their recovery are shown to get better sooner. This means you're helping them to recover more quickly.
- Shows your worker you care about their recovery and improves overall morale in your workforce.
- When your worker can recover sooner, it means a quicker return to full duties, and less interruption to your business.
- Supporting your worker to get back to work by offering suitable duties can lower your claims costs, reducing the impact on your premium.



Tips for finding suitable duties for a worker:

1 Focus on what your worker can do.

By focusing on your worker and their strengths and abilities, you'll help everyone stay positive.

2 Be flexible

Being flexible with your worker as they recover helps them to build up confidence. You might be able to change where, when or how they do their work. You could offer reduced hours, modify tasks, or provide a different workplace setting like remote work.

3 Prioritise open communication

Talk with your worker regularly and listen to their needs and concerns. This shows you care and helps with making any adjustments needed.

Did you know?

The biggest cost of a WorkCover claim is usually due to weekly compensation, or wages paid to your worker while they're off work.

Workers who felt unsupported by their employer during their claim were more likely to be off work for longer.

They were also at greater risk of experiencing mental health issues in connection to their injury. This uncertainty can be why employer and worker relationships can break down.

As an employer, this is where you can have a positive impact on the claim by offering suitable duties to your worker.

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First

Start by asking your worker what work they think they could safely do as they recover, in line with their doctor's advice.

You can also look at any restrictions on their work capacity certificate together, to help you decide.

Next

Identify duties for your worker, based on medical advice and what they can do. Here's some ideas to start:

- Talk to other business areas or look at different job descriptions in your workplace to find tasks outside of your worker's usual role.
- Can you reduce the complexity or pace of work?
- What technology or tools might help them?

Then

Have a clear return to work plan in place that outlines what work they'll be doing, timelines and any supports.

It's important for everyone to agree on the plan before starting. This helps to set expectations and shows your worker their injury is taken seriously.

You'll also know when things aren't going as planned, so you can make adjustments if needed.

Workers' compensation stigma

One of the biggest barriers workers face when going back to work after a work-related injury is stigma. They may worry what colleagues might think or say about them back at work.

This stigma, real or perceived, may be worse if the worker is recovering from a mental injury. You can help by creating a safe workplace culture where people know they're valued and supported, and where they feel comfortable to talk about their mental health.

Need more help identifying suitable duties?

If you're unsure, WorkCover is here to help. We can help you support your worker to get back into work. We can even share guidance from a worker's doctor or psychologist if it directly relates to helping them get back to work.



Read more

If you need help identifying suitable duties, you can also check out the resources available on our website.

WorkCover is here to help

If you have any questions, you can find your claim contact on WorkCover Connect and reach them directly. Or you can call one of our team on **1300 362 128**.

worksafe.qld.gov.au

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