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# Workplace Rehabilitation Policy and Procedures

## Policy Statement

East Coast Apprenticeships (ECA) recognises that helping workers to stay at work or make an early and safe return to work, minimises the impact of the injury or illness on them and their families.

Continuing to work during rehabilitation is often the best thing for the health and wellbeing of workers, ensuring they stay connected to their work group and supports available in the workplace.

We support our injured workers by having a system of workplace rehabilitation and seeking / providing suitable duties for them while they are recovering. We expect that all injured workers will return to work on suitable duties as soon as it is medically safe to do so. We have appointed a Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator (RRTWC) to manage workplace rehabilitation for our injured workers.

East Coast Apprenticeships is insured by WorkCover Queensland for work-related injuries and illnesses.

As part of our system of workplace rehabilitation we are committed to:

- providing a safe and healthy work environment
- encouraging the early reporting of injuries
- making suitable duties available to injured workers as soon as possible after an injury occurs
- consulting with injured workers to develop their suitable duties program
- respecting the confidentiality of our worker's medical and rehabilitation information
- reviewing our workplace rehabilitation policy and procedures at least every three years.



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Workers who are injured or become ill due to carrying out work should seek first aid or medical attention immediately. Their ECA Field Officer or Manager should be notified of incidents that require medical attention / time off work as soon as possible. This will ensure appropriate internal and external reporting requirements (such as to Workplace Health and Safety Queensland) are met, including access to Worker's Compensation.

ECA's Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator (RRTWC) will assist and guide injured workers through the claims process and returning to work, along with WorkCover QLD representatives (if applicable).

ECA's Field Officers and Managers are expected to remain in contact with their workers during their rehabilitation and offer support where needed.

***INJURED WORKERS (IW) should:***

- seek first aid or medical treatment
- notify their supervisor of the injury or illness and complete an incident report (if work related)
- tell the doctor that other (suitable) duties may be available at the workplace, even if they aren't able to do their normal role
- ask the doctor for a Workers' Compensation Medical Certificate (WCMC) / Work Capacity Certificate (WCC) - required to lodge a claim
- send a copy of the WCC to the RRTWC

***LODGING A WORKCOVER CLAIM***

Injured Workers (IW) can make a compensation claim on ECA's policy by either:

- a) applying online at [www.workcoverqld.com.au](http://www.workcoverqld.com.au)
- b) calling WorkCover on 1300 362 128
- c) completing a claim form and faxing it to 1300 651 387
- d) lodging through your doctor
- e) lodging through your employer

Once lodged, WorkCover has 20 business days to decide whether they accept the claim. In the meantime, you can request to be paid your leave entitlements to cover work days impacted by the injury / illness. Once accepted, those leave entitlements would be reimbursed.

WorkCover also offer an online service to assist IWs in tracking their claim. Contact WorkCover for access details.

If a claim is not accepted, IWs who cannot afford their rehabilitation costs could seek financial assistance from their health insurance (if available), superannuation fund or utilise public health care.

If required, IWs can also access services such as Employee Assistance Program (EAP) on 1800 808 374.

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***Injured Workers (IW) are responsible for:***

- 1) making / attending medical appointments and treatment appointments
- 2) making appointments outside of normal work hours, where possible, while completing suitable duties
- 3) participating in the development of suitable duties programs
- 4) actively participating in suitable duties programs
- 5) providing the employer with photos of WCCs as soon as received, including full duties clearance certificates
- 6) not returning to the workplace without prior medical authority
- 7) keeping the RRTWC, Field Officer / Manager and supervisor informed of progress or issues during rehabilitation

IW's have responsibilities to ensure the best success of their rehabilitation. Failure to fulfil their responsibilities can have an impact on any pay or WorkCover entitlements.

***IWs have the right to:***

- workers' compensation for work-related injuries accepted by WorkCover
- choose their own medical professional for treatments
- authorise the RRTWC to contact the doctor for advice about the return to work expectations
- the safe keeping of their personal information
- be provided with suitable duties, where possible, to assist their return to work
- be involved in developing a suitable duties plan
- ask for a Q-COMP review of WorkCover decisions that they disagree with (reviewable decisions are listed under s540 of the Act)
- have access to an impartial grievance process (check with your RRTWC and WorkCover first as they may be able to help)

***Grievance procedure***

If the IW is unhappy with a decision made at the workplace regarding their rehabilitation, they can raise the matter with their RRTWC. If the matter is unresolved they can ask the RRTWC to begin an internal review of the decision.

If the IW remains unhappy with the decision following an internal review (involving management), they can request that their WorkCover case manager becomes involved to resolve the dispute.

If either the IW or the employer are unhappy with a decision made by WorkCover, the decision may be reviewable with Q-COMP (strict time frames apply).

***RRTWC should:***

- 1) remain in regular contact with the IW, Field Officer / Manager and WorkCover throughout the rehabilitation process
- 2) if required, assist IWs apply for workers' compensation and lodge documents throughout their rehabilitation in a timely manner
- 3) if required and authorised by the worker, seek return to work information from doctors to assist in the planning of suitable duties programs
- 4) develop a suitable duties plan that enables a prompt and safe return to the workplace, utilising alternate duties with supportive Host Employers or college, where available
- 5) continue to monitor and upgrade the suitable duties program where required
- 6) keep the details of the rehabilitation file confidential
- 7) ask for feedback from the IW on their experience of the rehabilitation process once the claim has ended
- 8) educate Management, Field Officers and Host Employers about this workplace rehabilitation policy and procedures and ensure that this document is available for all employees.

***Field Officers / Managers should:***

- 1) notify the RRTWC promptly of reported injuries or illnesses and complete reports
- 2) help the RRTWC to identify suitable duties among the Host Employer network
- 3) offer support and encouragement to the IW
- 4) monitor the IW's progress while on suitable duties
- 5) explain the purpose of suitable duties to Host Employers and discuss how they can support early return to work

***Host Employers should:***

- assist injured workers (IW) with first aid, where required
- notify ECA promptly of reported injuries or illnesses
- help the RRTWC to identify suitable duties
- adjust rosters and workflows, where possible, to make sure they can participate in suitable duties
- monitor IW progress while on suitable duties and notify ECA of any concerns
- offer support and encouragement to the IW
- explain the purpose of suitable duties to co-workers and discuss how they can support early return to work

***PAYMENT OF WORKCOVER WAGES***

Once a WorkCover claim has been accepted, East Coast Apprenticeships will process wage benefits to the IW directly and in line with ECA pay periods.

For workers participating in a suitable duties program, East Coast Apprenticeships will pay the worker for hours worked and time off work due to the injury as approved by WorkCover.

East Coast Apprenticeships does not support overtime hours while on WorkCover and should be contacted before completing overtime for approval requirements.

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## DEFINITIONS

### ***Rehabilitation***

Rehabilitation is the process of getting injured workers (IW) back to work. Rehabilitation may involve receiving treatment from a registered person (eg physiotherapist, podiatrist, dentist) or aids or equipment approved by WorkCover (eg glasses, crutches, hearing aids).

### ***Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator (RRTWC)***

The RRTWC is the link between the injured worker (IW), the treating doctor, management, the Field Officers, Host Employers, WorkCover and any other person involved in the return to work of an injured worker.

### ***Suitable Duties (SD) or Return to Work (RTW) programs***

These are specially selected duties that are matched to the IW's capacity for work. Suitable duties could mean doing the worker's normal role but with restrictions or doing another job entirely. There are various options available through the RRTWC to accomplish a safe and prompt return to work. The suitable duties program will be monitored and upgraded as the recovery progresses.

### ***WorkCover Queensland and Common Terms***

East Coast Apprenticeships uses WorkCover Queensland as the insurer. WorkCover will make decisions on the injured worker's (IW) claim and will coordinate the overall rehabilitation plan based on the available medical information. WorkCover works closely with the RRTWC to ensure the safest and best possible return to work outcome.

Aggravation – a previous work-related or non-work-related injury that has developed symptoms due to work activities.

Physiotherapist (PT) – a medical health provider assisting with treating the IW.

Medical Specialist – doctors who have completed additional studies in a specialty field, such as an orthopaedic surgeon.

Occupational Therapist (OT) – client-centred therapy concerned with promoting health and wellbeing through occupation and participating in the activities of everyday life.

Independent Medical Evaluation (IME) – occurs when a doctor, psychologist, or other licensed healthcare professional conducts an examination of an IW to assess for permanent impairment.

Permanent Impairment (PI) – injury or illness that the IW will have to manage for life.

### ***Q-COMP***

Q-COMP is the Workers' Compensation Regulatory Authority in Queensland. Q-COMP has many functions including the running of the medical assessment tribunals, providing administrative reviews of insurer decisions, educating the scheme about rehabilitation and return to work and connecting injured workers (IW) with services that will assist them in re-entering the workplace if they are not able to return to their pre-injury role.