

Modified WORK

Build your plan today.

Working with the employer – Before you make the modified work call...

Modified work discussions with the employer are appropriate even if the worker is not fit for work. It's important to plant the modified work 'seed' early on. Preparation is key to your successful discussions. The information below guides you as you prepare to discuss and negotiate modified work with an employer.

Date of accident job demands

- Look at the job duties from the date of accident job.
- Compare these duties to the PDA and/or the RTWPM reports on file.
- This should help you come up with modified work ideas which you can then discuss with the employer. **This is the most important step to take to be prepared!**
- Check the employer's website to find out more about the company and research other positions or job functions that may be suitable for the worker.

Medical status

- Do you know what the worker's current diagnosis is?
- Are you able to explain and discuss the treatment plan with the employer?
- Do you know the worker's current physical abilities and restrictions?

Don't forget to review the Return to Work section of healthcare provider reporting

Barriers

- Are there any potential RTW barriers (e.g., transportation, child care, opioid use, transferable skills, worker/employer conflict)?
- Come up with potential solutions to remove these barriers so you are prepared to discuss them with the employer.
- Call the account manager to get an idea of any impact on claim costs if modified work is not arranged and to generate further suggestions on suitable employment.

Return to work plan

- Ensure you are familiar with the aspects of the RTW plan (medical and vocational) so that you can discuss it with the employer. This gives the employer the big picture as well as prepares you to address any concerns the employer may have.
- If permanent work restrictions are anticipated, you will want to discuss this with the employer as well to see if he/she is able to accommodate the worker.

Working with the employer – Making the modified work call...

Now that you have completed your preparation it is time to make the call! Use the information below to guide you.

Involve the employer

- Start your conversation by telling the employer when the worker (use the worker's name) will be ready to come back to work. Find out which job duties are available to the worker.
- Ask for the employer's insight on job tasks the worker can and cannot perform given the injury and work restrictions. **Focus on the worker's abilities.**
- Ask for the employer's feedback. This will tell the employer you are interested and want to involve the him/her in the modified work discussion.
- Outline the RTW plan to the employer. Based on the worker's abilities, ask the employer to identify the job duties he/she feels the worker could and could not perform. This also applies to the self-employed worker.

Remember, the PDA and RTWPM reporting is an excellent starting point for this discussion!

Talk about the benefits of modified work

- Discuss with employer the number of days the worker has been off work and in receipt of TTD benefits.
- Discuss the maximum claim cost for the claim, where the costs are currently and why the employer would benefit by providing suitable modified work.
- Let the employer know that statistics have shown the longer someone is off work the more difficult it can be to get he or she back to work.
- Emphasize that modified work can keep the worker focused on ability and decrease a disability mindset that can easily develop the longer the worker is off work.

Address barriers with an open mind

- Don't back down if the employer seems resistant. Rather, probe to understand why. Ask for more details. For example ask, "What is preventing you from taking the worker (use the worker's name) back on modified work?" And follow up with, "How can I assist you?"
- If the employer cannot commit to modified work (e.g., they may need time to discuss the plan with management), try to gain agreement on a tentative start date and agree to a specific follow-up time.