

Return to Work (RTW) Process (High Level Overview)

INJURY OCCURS / ACUTE PHASE: INITIAL SET UP

- Ensure appropriate **medical services** are being arranged (physio, chiro, OT, etc.).
- Can the worker engage in any **work duties**, either pre-injury or transitional? Physio/chiro functional scan if needed.



ACUTE / SUB-ACUTE / EARLY CHRONIC / LATE CHRONIC PHASES: MANAGE MEDICAL AND RTW

- Consult **MDGuidelines** regarding **Disability Duration Guidelines**, send expectation letter.
- **Action plan**, four-week service review.
- Can the worker engage in **work duties**, either pre-injury or transitional, pending maximum medical/functional improvement? Ensure you are receiving and reviewing functional scans as needed.
- Are there **objective signs** of improvement, as reported by SP/GP/surgeon (e.g., increased functional ability)? If not, is there a physical / medical explanation for this? Is it related to the injury?
- If there is no physical explanation, are there **psychological or social flags** (Orebro)? Are they related to the injury? Are pain management counseling/tiered services appropriate?
- Ongoing **communication** with worker, employer, health care providers. Case Conferences at 4 weeks and as required. Timely documentation of all communication that occurs.



MAXIMUM FUNCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT: RTW DECISIONS

Is the worker at a functional level that **meets pre-injury demands**? If so, **RTW**.

- **If not at pre-injury functional level**, consideration of likelihood of **PMI** in relation to the injury before proceeding.
- Consideration of **permanent accommodation** with pre-injury employer.
- Are there **Re-employment** obligations?
- **Functional Capacity Evaluation** (if necessary) to determine objective functional abilities and more in-depth return to work planning and consideration of VR services (if required).



IF BEYOND THE PRE-INJURY EMPLOYER: DECISIONS RE LONG TERM WAGE REPLACEMENT ELIGIBILITY

No employment possible with pre-injury employer (due to injury):

- Consideration of entitlement to **VR services**.
- Consideration of **Maximum Medical Recovery** / timing for **PMI/PRI** assessment.
- If **VR services appropriate**, possible RTW planning/coordination within a VR program (OT intervention / OJT, EIP programs); eventual **partial / no EERB**.
- If **VR services not appropriate** (related to injury) or suitable and reasonably available work cannot be identified through VR assessments, **full EERB**.