



A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY



Return to Work Self-Assessment Guide *for Ontario Workplaces*

Return to Work

Self-Assessment Guide

for Ontario Workplaces

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Introduction

This guide can be used by Ontario workplaces seeking to realize the economic and human resource benefits of having an evidence-based good practices approach to returning their injured or ill workers to work in a safe and timely manner.

To date there is no generic, off-the-shelf Return to Work program or approach that will work in all workplaces of all sizes in all business sectors. Each workplace needs a program or approach tailored to its unique needs. At the same time, there are principles and practices that have been demonstrated to achieve good results for those companies willing to invest the time to protect the health and productivity of their workforce.

Shared Responsibility

For companies in Ontario covered under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, returning an injured worker to work is a shared responsibility primarily between the employer and the worker. Where there are shared responsibilities, communication and cooperation toward a common goal is essential. The WSIB is responsible for claims management and monitoring, providing education and assistance to the worker and employer, and to the workplace. Health providers are responsible for providing timely health or medical and functional abilities information. Together, all parties working toward a shared goal of early and safe return to work and full productivity has the potential to reduce the human and economic impact of workplace injuries and illness.

About this Guide

This Return to Work (RTW) Self-Assessment Guide will help you assess your ability to get employees back to safe, productive and sustainable work as soon as medically possible. It can also help you identify what's working with your company's current approach and program, and pinpoint any areas that can be improved.

Benefits

The Return to Work Self-Assessment Guide can help you:

- Know more about your company's actual return to work performance
- Pinpoint what's working and identify opportunities for improvement, whether they are related to your policies, programs, or to the use of specific known and proven strategies
- Measurably improve performance by implementing changes in response to the findings of the self-assessment
- Improve return to work outcomes, and
- Demonstrate the link between workplace health and safety and productivity

Who should conduct the self-assessment?

The best people to conduct the assessment are those from your human resources, and health and safety/disability management (or WSIB claims and case management) areas. It's also helpful to involve your health and safety committee, employees/supervisors and managers. Consider creating a multi-disciplinary team to conduct the assessment.

The self-assessment should ideally result in a report to senior management or key decision makers in your company. Such a report should include findings, critical elements for improvement, recommendations, implementation time frames and action responsibilities

Structure of this Guide

The guide contains three areas of assessment:

- **Organizational Framework**
- **Return to Work Program Management**
- **Strategies for Successful Return to Work Outcomes**

Under each of the three headings there are a number of specific areas, each with a list of questions to be assessed. Each question should be answered with 'YES' or 'NO'. A 'Yes' indicates that the question or requirement has been fully satisfied, while a 'No' indicates that there are gaps that need improvement.

How to get a 'YES'

To score a 'Yes' on any question, the assessing group will need to be able to demonstrate where the information is located. For example, the question 'Are managers in your company accountable for the prevention and management of workplace injuries?' might require that:

- q Managers' job descriptions or performance objective reflect these responsibilities
- q Managers' performance agreements also reflect the responsibility to accommodate injured workers to suitable employment
- q Managers report to Senior Management on a specified basis on the prevention activities and outcomes of return to work

Other places where the information supporting a 'Yes' answer might be found include:

- q Return to Work Policy
- q Audit outcomes
- q Minutes
- q Manuals (Human Resources, Health and Safety, Operations)
- q Statistical reports
- q Annual reports
- q Internal newsletters/information
- q Notice boards
- q Intranet notices

Organizational Framework

- > Return to Work Policy
- > Leadership
- > Roles and Responsibilities
- > Consultation and Communication
- > Review and Evaluation

Return to Work Policy

Does your company have a written RTW policy that is clear and simple to understand? Yes No

Has it been endorsed by your CEO or executive officer? Yes No

Does it outline your company's commitment to RTW and accountability in its success? Yes No

Is the primary goal of your RTW policy the timely, safe and sustainable return to work of your injured or ill employees? Yes No

Is your RTW policy accessible to all employees? Yes No

Is your RTW policy part of the company's human resource management strategy? Yes No

Is your RTW policy compliant with relevant Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, Occupational Health and Safety Act and Human Rights legislation? Yes No

SCORE: (Count Yes Answers) _____

Leadership

Are managers in your company accountable for the prevention and management of workplace injuries and RTW? Yes No

Do managers in your company consider, on a regular basis, reports relating to the return to work of injured or ill employees? Yes No

Has your company developed and implemented, programs or strategies to minimize workplace injuries or illness — i.e. a wellness program? Yes No

Does your company have a strategy in place for reducing or containing its costs associated with workplace injury and illness? Yes No

Has your company committed to early intervention and RTW case management as an important RTW strategy? Yes No

SCORE: (Count Yes Answers) _____

Roles and Responsibilities

Does your RTW policy define the roles and responsibilities of (check all boxes to score Yes):

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Senior Management | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| Line managers and supervisors? | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| Co-workers? | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| Disability/RTW staff? | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| Insurance provider/WSIB? | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |

Does your company's RTW policy define the rights, responsibilities and entitlements of injured or ill employees? Yes No

Does your company regularly review employees' awareness of their rights, responsibilities and entitlements? Yes No

Does your company regularly review line managers' and supervisors' awareness of their roles and responsibilities under the RTW policy? Yes No

Do supervisors and line managers show commitment to the RTW policy? Yes No

Do supervisors and line managers understand the relationship between return to work outcomes and the impact on the company's cost of workplace injury and illness? Yes No

SCORE: (Count Yes Answers) _____

Consultation and Communication

Were your employees involved in the development of the RTW policy? Yes No

Has your RTW policy been endorsed by management? Yes No

Are the procedures for communication with employees stated in your RTW policy? Yes No

Is your RTW policy communicated in a manner that is easily understood by employees? Yes No

Does your company have procedures in place for advising staff and management of changes to the RTW policy or procedures in a timely fashion? Yes No

Does your company regularly review the effectiveness of its policy dissemination, and is the process improved based on the outcomes of the reviews? Yes No

SCORE: (Count Yes Answers) _____

Review and Evaluation

Is your company's RTW policy reviewed regularly (e.g. every 2-3 years)? Yes No

Is this review conducted in communication with relevant employee representatives? Yes No

Does your company regularly monitor the implementation of its RTW policy and procedures? Yes No

Does your company have the means in place to monitor and report the cost of RTW programs? Yes No

Does your company have the means in place to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the RTW process? Yes No

Does your company regularly provide reports regarding RTW performance to a consultative or other appropriate forum? Yes No

Does your company update its RTW policy because of the results of monitoring, review and evaluation? Yes No

Does your company update its procedures because of the results of monitoring, review and evaluation? Yes No

Are the reviews of RTW policy and procedures linked back to the company's premium performance? Yes No

SCORE: (Count Yes Answers) _____

Return to Work Program Management

- > RTW Case Management
- > Marketing/Communications
- > Performance indicators

RTW Case Management

Does your company have an area or person responsible for RTW program management? (if “no” move to “Strategies for Successful RTW Outcomes” on page 12)

Does the person with RTW case management responsibilities have written delegation from the CEO\or other senior management? Yes No

Do your RTW policies and procedures require active management of the RTW process? Yes No

Does your RTW policy identify how to provide case management in the company? Yes No

Does your RTW policy recognize that people with case management responsibilities need to be in a position to influence the RTW outcome? Yes No

Do people with case management responsibilities have the relevant skill and experience to achieve return to work outcomes? Yes No

Does your RTW policy require the formulation of skills development programs for the company’s case managers? Yes No

Does your RTW policy require case managers to have accreditation and/or training in the field of disability management? Yes No

Does your company have a comprehensive company or worksite orientation? Yes No

Do the resources devoted to the RTW case management function in your company reflect the case load? Yes No

Do people performing case management in your company have access to adequate office, communication and storage facilities? Yes No

Are case management resources in your company reviewed regularly? Yes No

continued on next page

Are the outcomes of reviews of RTW case management resources in your company used to influence the level or deployment of resources? Yes No

Does your company's RTW policy encourage case managers to establish and maintain support networks? Yes No

Is there regular contact with WSIB adjudicators and/or RTW expert resources regarding cases? Yes No

SCORE: (Count Yes Answers) _____

Marketing/Communication

Does your company ensure that key stakeholders are aware of the RTW case manager's role? Yes No

When your organization hires new employees, does their training and/or orientation include the organization's RTW policy and the case manager's role? Yes No

Do your organization's case managers actively market their role to stakeholders? Yes No

Does your RTW policy identify a process for promoting the case manager role? Yes No

SCORE: (Count Yes Answers) _____

Performance Indicators

Does your company use the following performance indicators?

- Number and average cost of WSIB claims
- Number and average cost of WSIB claims by injury type
- Claim rate per 100 employees
- Incidence of claims per wage amount
- Actual and percentage of lost time
- Duration and cost of time lost by injury type
- Interval between date of injury and notification to case manager
- Interval between date of injury and date of RTW plan
- Interval between date of injury and start of RTW plan
- Outcomes achieved by RTW plans developed by RTW service providers (if you have external disability management/RTW professionals providing these services)
- Outcomes achieved by RTW plans developed by case manager

continued on next page

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- Average time to RTW by outcome (i.e. regular work, temporary, or permanent accommodated work)
 - Average time to RTW by outcome type
 - % that RTW within 30, 60, 90, 180, and 360 days by outcome type
 - % that RTW by outcome type
 - % that return to pre-injury job
 - Recurrence/new injury rate
 - RTW outcomes achieved by injury type and date of injury
 - Cost of RTW programs
 - Expenditure on the RTW case management function as a proportion of total payroll (if relevant)
-

SCORE (Count Yes Answers and divide count by 5)

Strategies For Successful Return To Work Outcomes

- > Implementation Strategies
- > Employee Assistance Program
- > Pre-Claim Activity
- > Early Intervention
- > Return to Work Program
- > Suitable Employment
- > Return to Work Outcomes

Implementation Strategies

Is your company's RTW policy accompanied by an implementation strategy?

Yes No

Does the implementation strategy include direction on the following? (check all boxes to score a Yes):

Injury notification/reporting of injury to WSIB,
Ministry of Labour

Development of a RTW program

Implementation and management of a RTW program

Identifying suitable employment opportunities

Developing individualized RTW plans

Case closure

Ongoing monitoring and follow-up

Yes No

Does your company's RTW procedure emphasize the need to inform the WSIB about RTW progress?

Yes No

Does your company's RTW procedure address the documentation, confidentiality, and security of employee information, as well as privacy principles and issues around the release of medical information?

Yes No

Do your company's managers know and understand the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)* and its principles as they relate to RTW?

Yes No

Does your company's RTW policy address the issue of non-occupational injuries?

Yes No

SCORE: (Count Yes Answers)

Employee Assistance Program

Does your company have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)? (If no, move to Pre-claim Activity.) Yes No

Do you receive regular reports from the EAP? Yes No

Does your company analyze the outcomes from the EAP? Yes No

Is this information reported to senior management for action? Yes No

Is action taken? Yes No

SCORE: (Count Yes Answers) _____

Pre-claim Activity

Does your company begin planning RTW before a claim is established by the WSIB? Yes No

Does your company have resources for pre-claim intervention? Yes No

Does your company monitor and measure the outcomes of pre-claim interventions? Yes No

SCORE: (Count Yes Answers) _____

Early Intervention

Does your company have procedures in place to ensure that RTW and individual plans are managed effectively? Yes No

Does your company have a reporting system that ensures immediate notification of an injury or incident? Yes No

Does your company have procedures that ensure the workplace is made safe following an accident? Yes No

Following an injury, does someone from the company, such as the supervisor and/or other designated person, make immediate contact with the injured employee? Yes No

Does your company help its injured employees complete WSIB claim forms? Yes No

Are procedures in place that ensure the Employers Report of Accident (Form 7) is forwarded to the WSIB within 3 working days of the accident being reported by the injured employee? Yes No

Are your company's supervisors, line managers and case managers notified immediately of injuries or illnesses that could keep an employee from reporting for work? Yes No

SCORE: (Count Yes Answers) _____

Return to Work Plans

Do you develop individualized RTW plans in consultation with the injured employee, health care providers, line managers and supervisors, and the WSIB, as necessary? Yes No

Do you base RTW plans on an injured employee’s functional abilities? Yes No

Are RTW plans focused on the employee’s safe and early return to work? Yes No

Are RTW plans outcome-focused, with clear goals that can be achieved within realistic time frames? Yes No

Do RTW plans address the consequences of an employee failing to participate and/or cooperate? Yes No

Is there regular dialogue between the injured employee, the immediate supervisor, and the WSIB as necessary during the RTW plan? Yes No

Does your company have procedures for monitoring and reporting the effectiveness of RTW plan implementation? Yes No

Does your company routinely review all WSIB cases? Yes No

Do you hold case conferences with key stakeholders if the RTW plan is not progressing appropriately? Yes No

Are changes to RTW plans developed in consultation with all stakeholders and are they justified and documented? Yes No

SCORE: (Count Yes Answers) _____

Suitable Employment

Does your RTW policy commit to providing suitable employment for injured employees that is safe and productive? Yes No

Does senior management support that commitment? Yes No

Does your RTW policy address the development of appropriate alternative duties, programs and/or job placement strategies for employees unable to return to their pre-injury work? Yes No

Are line managers and supervisors fully aware of the primary costs to the company when an injured employee is not returned to work? Yes No

Does your RTW policy aim to integrate job placement and redeployment strategies with your company’s human resource management policies? Yes No

Do you regularly monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of alternative duty and job placement strategies across your company? Yes No

SCORE: (Count Yes Answers) _____

Return to Work Outcomes

Do you ensure that procedures are in place to ensure closure of RTW plans takes place and outcomes documented? Yes No

Do you monitor employees following their return to work? Yes No

Does your company's RTW policy require post-closure reviews (i.e. within six months)? Yes No

Are the effectiveness and efficiency of RTW plans reviewed (i.e. cost and duration)? Yes No

Are employees, line managers and supervisors asked for feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of RTW plans and the process? Yes No

Is the outcome of any review of the RTW process used to improve case management strategies? Yes No

SCORE: (Count Yes Answers) _____

Assessment Summary

SCORING

Step 1: Tabulation of the Scores

Transfer the total from each of the self-assessment sheets to the Assessment Summary Score Sheet on the next page. Remember to only count the Yes answers, counting each Yes as “1”.

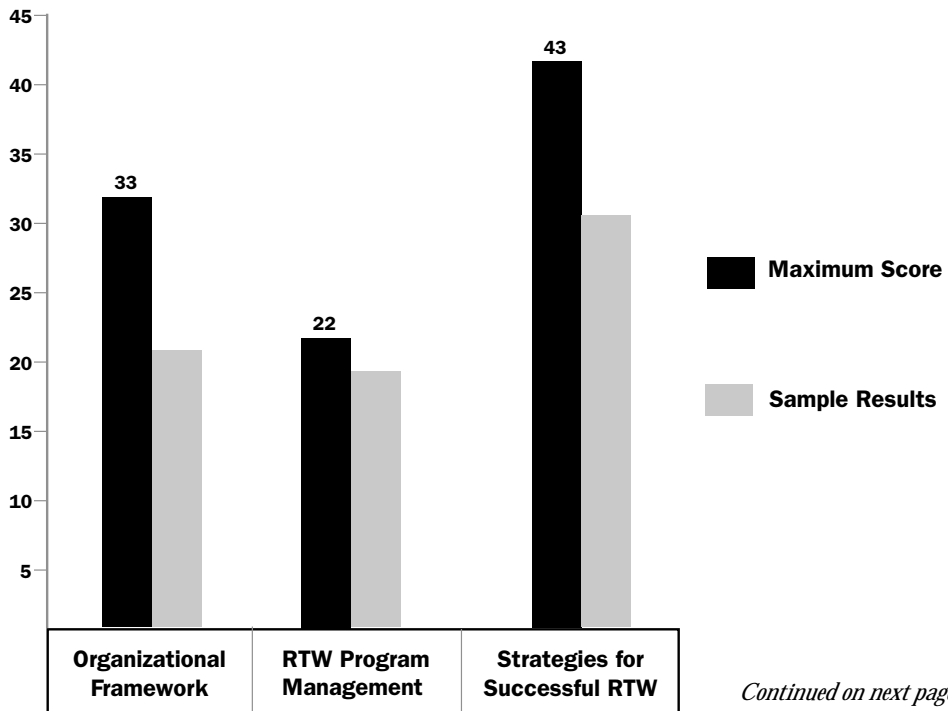
A question can only be answered Yes if you can provide documented evidence that the requirement has been satisfied. Otherwise, you must score the answer as a No.

Once you have transferred the numbers, total each component on the score sheet. This total figure then gives you an indication of your performance against that heading.

Step 2: Graph the Result

On the page following the score sheet is a graph with three vertical bars representing the maximum score for each of the three specific headings of this self-assessment. Plot on this graph beside each of the vertical bars your score for each of the headings from the score sheet.

For example, if you have scored ‘20’ for ‘organizational framework’, you should draw a vertical bar up to the 20 mark beside the baseline bar for this heading. Repeat this for each of the three headings. An example of how your graph may look is shown below.



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Step 3: Interpretation

The scores you have achieved for each area will give you an indication of your performance against that heading. The position of the vertical bars you have drawn will give a visual summary of your performance.

Clearly, one hundred percent (i.e. an assessment total of 98) is the best outcome in measuring the management of return to work in your company. The self-assessment quickly identifies those areas where your company can devote further time and resources toward improving the way return to work is managed.

Step 4: Follow-up Action

Every question where you have answered 'No' is an opportunity for improvement and an action plan.

The action plan can be presented to senior management in a report that addresses the findings of the RTW self-assessment team. The report should talk about the critical elements for improvement; give recommendations, set implementation time frames, and identify action responsibilities.

Step 5: Set Dates for Review

This RTW self assessment guide can form part of an ongoing process of improvement.

The last step to this self assessment is to set the date for your next review:

Date of Review: _____

Assessment Summary

SCORE SHEET

Organizational Framework	Max. Score	Your Score
RTW Policy	7	_____
Leadership	5	_____
Roles and Responsibilities	6	_____
Consultation and Communication	6	_____
Review and Evaluation	9	_____
Component Total:	33	_____
Return to Work Program Management		
Case Management	14	_____
Marketing	4	_____
Performance Indicators	4	_____
Component Total:	22	_____
Strategies for Successful RTW Outcomes		
Implementation Strategies	6	_____
Employee Assistance Program	5	_____
Pre-Claim Intervention	3	_____
Early Intervention	7	_____
Return to Work plans	10	_____
Suitable Employment	6	_____
Return to Work Outcomes	6	_____
Component Total:	43	_____
Assessment Total:	98	_____

Based on your assessment total, have you identified:

- What Works
- Improvement Opportunities
- Next Steps

Graphical Summary

Return to Work Desired Outcomes

