

Additional recover at work support

The State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA) provides and funds a number of vocational rehabilitation programs to help employers support their workers to recover at work or, where necessary, obtain a new job.

The programs address barriers and risks to recovery at work such as:

- a lack of suitable work options that match the worker's current capacity
- the need for workplace modifications or equipment
- the need for additional training and/or skill development
- financial difficulties for the employer.

The provider will be able to offer information regarding available programs or you can find more information at www.sira.nsw.gov.au.

Further information, concerns and complaints

More information about recovery at work, providers and workers compensation is available at www.sira.nsw.gov.au.

For a list of current SIRA approved workplace rehabilitation providers, visit www.sira.nsw.gov.au or call us on 13 10 50.

Providers are approved by SIRA. The Nationally Consistent Approval Framework for Workplace Rehabilitation Providers and the NSW Supplement outlines the criteria workplace rehabilitation providers must meet to deliver services in NSW.

Concerns about a provider should be discussed with the manager of the provider. If this does not address the issue, contact your insurer case manager. If the issue is still not resolved after the assistance of the insurer, contact SIRA on 13 10 50 or send an email to contact@sira.nsw.gov.au.

You may want to discuss the possibility of obtaining a referral to a different provider.

What to expect from your workplace rehabilitation provider.

A guide for workers and employers



Disclaimer

This publication may contain information that relates to the regulation of workers compensation insurance, motor accident third party (CTP) insurance and home building compensation in NSW. It may include details of some of your obligations under the various schemes that the State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA) administers. However to ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation as currently in force. Up to date legislation can be found at the NSW Legislation website www.legislation.nsw.gov.au.

This publication does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law as it applies to particular problems or to individuals, or as a substitute for legal advice. You should seek independent legal advice if you need assistance on the application of the law to your situation.

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Catalogue no. SIRA08054

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What is a workplace rehabilitation provider?

Workplace rehabilitation providers help address risk factors which may affect a worker's ability to recover at work. These factors may include difficulty identifying suitable work, complex injury, delayed recovery or communication breakdown.

The workplace rehabilitation provider will appoint a rehabilitation consultant who will assist the worker and their support team (which may include the employer, doctor, insurer and others) to achieve a positive recovery at work. The rehabilitation consultant will be a health professional such as an occupational therapist, rehabilitation counsellor, physiotherapist, exercise physiologist or psychologist.

Why is recovery at work important?

Research shows:

- the longer a worker is away from work, the less likely they are to return to work
- staying active after injury reduces pain symptoms and helps workers return to their usual activities at home and work sooner
- working helps workers stay active which is an important part of their treatment and recovery.

What services can be provided?

Recovering with the same employer

Depending on the needs of a worker and employer, a provider can perform a single service (such as a workplace assessment) or provide ongoing support until a worker has achieved a safe and durable recovery at work.

Workplace rehabilitation services are generally delivered at the workplace in consultation with all parties.

Services may involve:

- educating workers and employers about the health benefits of good work and how to manage injury and disability in the workplace
- conducting specialised assessments to determine a worker's ability to safely perform work
- identifying safe and suitable work to support improvements in a worker's capacity
- identifying options to reduce work demands (including advice about modifying work, providing equipment or workplace modifications)
- identifying and addressing physical, psychological and/or workplace barriers that may affect a worker's recovery at, or return to work
- implementing a plan tailored with the worker and employer to achieve agreed recovery at work goals.

Return to work with a new employer

Most workers are able to recover and remain with their pre-injury employer. However, where this is not possible, a provider can help a worker obtain work with a new employer.

This may involve:

- assessing the worker's skills, education and experience to identify suitable work options
- providing job seeking assistance and organising training (where appropriate)
- accessing appropriate SIRA-funded programs and services that support the worker to secure employment.

You can find more information about recovery at work at www.sira.nsw.gov.au.

Engaging a workplace rehabilitation provider

While the employer or insurer usually decides which provider will be used in each situation, the worker should be consulted on the decision and given the opportunity to refuse or request a change in provider.

The insurer is responsible for engaging the provider and paying for their services. Service costs are recorded as a claims cost.

After being engaged by the insurer, the provider will contact the employer and worker to discuss their needs and arrange suitable times to meet.

Whether you are the employer or the worker, there are some key questions you can ask when you first meet with the provider:

- How often will you see or contact me?
- How can I best communicate with you about my/the worker's progress?
- What services will you provide?
- How can I contribute to my/the worker's recovery?
- How long do you estimate it will take to achieve the agreed goal?

You can also support the process by giving the provider information such as:

- a description of the pre-injury role
- a list of available short-term suitable work options
- any recover at work or return to work plans already developed
- contact details for the worker, employer, return to work coordinator, doctor and other treating health professionals (where appropriate).