

## PURPOSE

This handbook is aimed at medical practitioners involved in managing a patient with a workplace injury or illness\*. It aims to:

- guide you through the injury management process
- highlight your role and responsibilities
- explain WorkCover Tasmania's expectations of you in managing these patients.

This handbook is part of the required reading material for medical practitioners applying to be accredited to issue workers compensation medical certificates.

\*In this handbook, the term 'workplace injury' is used; it also covers work-related illness. The term 'injured worker' is used; it also covers a worker suffering a work-related illness.

### **Please note**

The information in this handbook focuses specifically on legislative provisions pertaining to medical practitioners.

However, it does not provide comment on or reference to every provision in the legislation and has no legal force and is not to be taken as an expression of the law.

You should therefore read this handbook in conjunction with the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*, the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Regulations 2001* and any other relevant legislation.

Copies of the legislation can be purchased from Print Applied Technology: call (03) 6233 3289 or freecall 1800 030 940. It is also available on the Internet at [www.thelaw.tas.gov.au](http://www.thelaw.tas.gov.au)

## PROPOSED CONTENT

### **What is injury management?**

- Definition of injury management
- Guiding injury management principles

### **Your Role: The primary treating medical practitioner**

- Your responsibilities as a primary treating medical practitioners
- Becoming accredited to issue workers compensation medical certificates
- About workers compensation medical certificates
  - Types of workers compensation medical certificates
  - How and when to complete certificates
  - Complexities when issuing final medical certificates
- Guiding certification principles for medical practitioners
  - Stay at work / return to work is the central goal of clinical management

- Time off work should only be certified when medically necessary
- Staying at work prevents the development and/or worsening of psychosocial issues
- Medical certificates must be clear, specific and demonstrate progress
- Effective communication and teamwork are critical
- Clinical management must be based on evidence
- Allocating adequate time to provide assistance and information to the worker is crucial

### **Roles of others**

- Role of injured worker
- Role of injury management co-ordinators
- Role of return to work co-ordinators
- Role of workplace rehabilitation providers
- Role of allied health professionals
- Role of occupational physicians

### **Other medical practitioners**

- Role of specialists
- Role of medical mentors
- Role of impairment assessors
- Role independent examiners/reviewers

### **Planning the workers treatment and return to work**

- Consultations
  - The initial consultation and setting expectations
  - Promoting self management
- Return to work and injury management plans
  - Types of plans
  - Preparation of plans
  - Review of plans
- Reports
  - Requests for reports
  - Obligations to provide reports
  - Review of plans
- Treatment costs and fees
  - Seeking approval for treatment costs associated with plans
  - Billing for costs not covered by normal consultation fees i.e. Communication, preparation of reports

### **Dispute prevention and resolution**

- The workers compensation tribunal
- Queries or complaints about workers compensation claims
- Inappropriate or unprofessional conduct by other parties
- Disputes about independent medical reviews
- Disputes about suitable duties and rehabilitation services
- Payments where a claim is disputed

### **Independent medical reviews/examinations**

- What is an independent review?
- When is a worker required to undergo a medical review?
- How are previous medical reports and records accessed?
- Treatment recommended by an independent medical reviewer
- Use of reports in tribunal proceedings

### **Medical panels**

- Referring a medical question to the tribunal
- How is a medical panel formed?
- Powers of medical panels
- Determinations

### **Other**

- Seeking legal advice
- Suspected fraud
- Workers under video surveillance

### **Further resources**