



Return to Work Coordinator Forum

Brad Parker - Assistant Director



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What we will cover today

- Define the role
- Look at what has changed and the impact to the RTWC role
- Knowledge and skills of RTWC
- Expectations of the role moving forward
- Touch on the health benefits of work and the consequence of being out of work for extended periods
- Look at some of the things that you should be doing in your role
- And end with a Q and A session



What is a Return to Work Co-ordinator?

Someone who provides an injured worker with **workplace-based** support and assistance

They have an intimate knowledge and understanding of the various jobs, processes, people and management systems within the workplace

When is a Return to Work Co-ordinator to be appointed?

The *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* requires employers with more than 50 workers to appoint a RTW Co-ordinator

July 2010 Amendments to the Act

- The RTW & IMM provides a framework for improving and streamlining the management of workplace injury and illness and aims to deliver better health and return to work outcomes for injured workers
- Amendments provided the necessary legislative framework to implement the Return to Work and Injury Management Model (RTW & IMM)
- The requirement for employers to appoint a RTW Co-ordinator remained unchanged, hence the reason for WorkCover's initial focus on other key parties
- **However some new provisions relating to RTW Co-ordinators were introduced.....**

July 2010 Amendments to the Act

143D. Return-to-work co-ordinator may be required to be appointed

(1) An employer who employs **more than 50 workers** must appoint a return-to-work co-ordinator.

(2) A person may only be appointed under subsection (1) to be a return-to-work co-ordinator if, **where the Board approves a course of training** –

(a) the person has successfully completed the training; or

(b) the Board is satisfied that the person has obtained a qualification or completed a course of training that is at least equivalent to the course of training approved by the Board.

(3) A worker's employer who employs more than 50 workers, as soon as practicable after becoming aware that a worker has suffered a significant injury, **must assign the worker to the return-to-work co-ordinator** appointed under subsection (1) in respect of the employer.

July 2010 Amendments to the Act

143D. Return-to-work co-ordinator may be required to be appointed (Cont)

- (4) A worker's employer may only assign a worker to a return-to-work co-ordinator if **the co-ordinator is familiar with the workplace**, and the management and staff of the workplace, in which the worker is employed.
- (5) A return-to-work co-ordinator in respect of a worker is to –
- (a) **assist** with return-to-work planning and the implementation of the worker's approved return-to-work plan or approved injury management plan; and
 - (b) **monitor** the worker's progress towards returning to work; and
 - (c) assist the worker to perform the worker's designated work duties in a safe and appropriate manner; and
 - (d) **provide** the worker with reassurance and encouragement in respect of the treatment of the worker's injury and the worker's return to work; and
 - (e) **encourage and foster a good relationship**, and effective communication, between the worker, the worker's employer and the employer's insurer.

Where does the RTWC role fit?

New
Role



What makes a good Return to Work Co-ordinator?

- Genuine desire to be a RTW Coordinator
- Respected and supported by staff and managers
- Familiar with and has access to all areas of the workplace
- Has or can develop rapport with workers and listens
- Can be sensitive and empathetic to workers' needs but does not molly coddle the worker
- Can identify barriers to return to work and is able to overcome them
- Is proactive in their approach to work
- Is objective and can weigh up needs of both worker and workplace
- Recognises differing behavioral needs and expectations of workers and can deal with these differences
- Has sufficient authority to make decisions and to ensure activities (as detailed in plans) are followed
- Has the ability to recognise when assistance is required or do not have the necessary knowledge/expertise to achieve an outcome

Return to Work Co-ordinator Training Requirements

- Who has undertaken RTWC training in the past?
- The WorkCover Tasmania Board has NOT approved a course of training
- BUT recognises that RTWC's require certain knowledge and skills
- The following three units recognised within the AQF are now recommended for completion

FNSWCMP 303A	Work within the workers compensation industry sector
FNSWCMP 502A	Develop return to work strategies
BSBFLM 503B	Manage effective workplace relationships

**Completed units can be used for
recognition towards an IMC qualification**



Return to Work Monitor – 2010/11

Most helpful:

- Doctors
- Rehabilitation providers
- RTWCs



Table 10: Rating of people who helped/made it harder to RTW

Q21a-f. For each person I would like you to tell me if what they are doing is helping you get back to work, making it harder to get back to work or having no effect on you getting back to work...

Indicative base for jurisdictions		TAS (333) %	Australia (2,880) %
Doctor (n=2,809)	Helped	80	76
	Harder	5	3
Rehab provider (n=2,144)	Helped	72	74
	Harder	7	5
Work rehab coord.(n=1,885)	Helped	58	57
	Harder	8	10
Supervisor (n=2,522)	Helped	50	52
	Harder	14	13
Employer (n=2,724)	Helped	53	52
	Harder	17	16
Insurer (n=2,690)	Helped	40	41
	Harder	12	14

Base: All respondents who provided a rating

Note: ↑ (or ↓) indicates that the estimate shown is significantly higher (or lower) than the national average.

Return to Work Monitor – 2010/11

- The level of helpfulness of RTWCs has, in the past, been higher in Tasmania than nationally.
- Helpfulness of RTWCs has declined over the last four years and was significantly lower in 2010/11 (58%), compared to 2006/07 (71%).



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Duties of the Return to Work

A RTW Co-ordinator in respect of an injured worker is to:

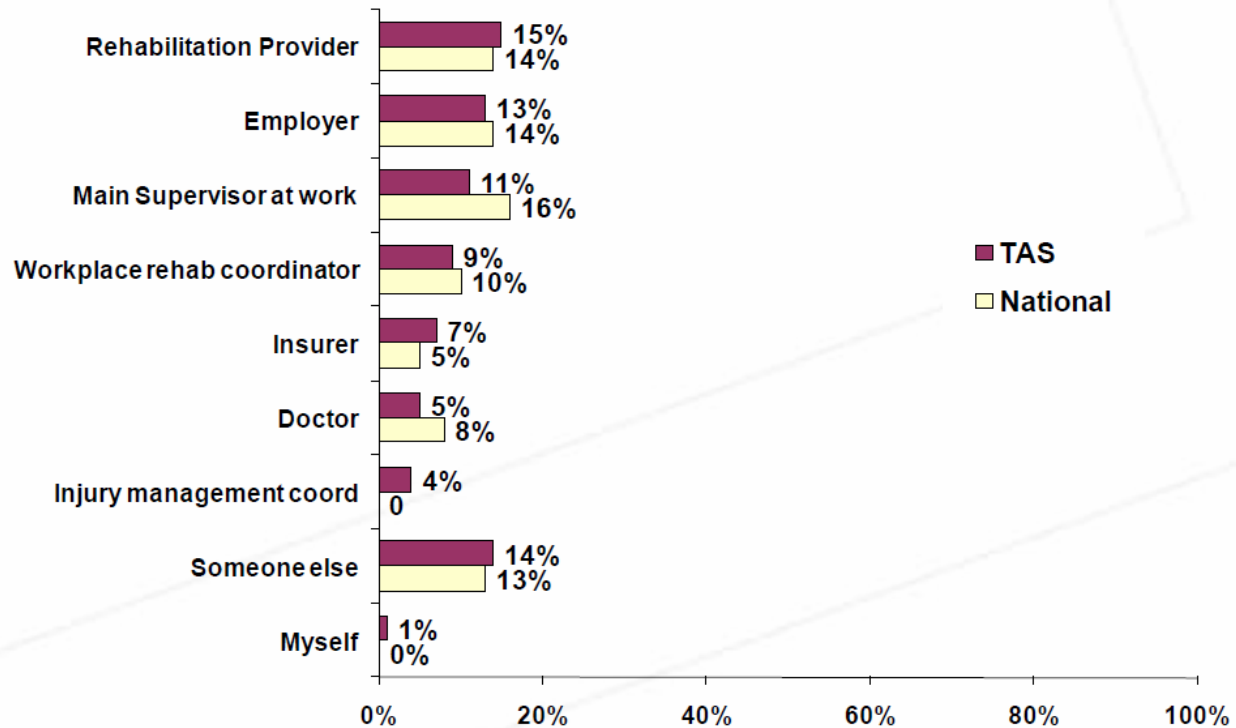
- Assist in developing and implementing timely return to work plans and injury management plans

- The RTW Monitor is a national survey of injured workers who have had ten days or more compensation



Figure 25: Who helped to follow RTW plan (Comparative)

Q16b. Who helped to follow RTW plan?



Opportunities to influence

It is anticipated that RTW Co-ordinates will:

- Provide input into workplace health and safety, and preparing and maintaining **injury management programs**, such as developing an injury management policy and associated processes
- Assist in regular monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of workplace injury management programs against outcomes





- An injury management program is a series of documented policies and procedures that detail how the insurer will operate in order to achieve a co-ordinated and integrated process for injury management
- Employers must adopt and comply with its insurer's approved injury management program, or have its own approved program in place



Alternative Duties

It is Expected that RTW Co-ordinates will:

- Assist in identifying timely and suitable and meaningful duties

REGISTER OF ALTERNATIVE DUTIES WITHIN THE WORKPLACE

Under the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988, where an injured worker cannot immediately return to their pre-injury job, their employer is to provide suitable and meaningful alternative duties (unless it is not reasonable or practical to do so).

Research indicates that the longer an injured worker is away from work, the less likely it is that they will return. Alternative duties play a pivotal role in the injured worker's recovery by preventing loss of their job skills, and maintaining their self-esteem and social networks.

What are alternative duties?
Alternative duties are temporary duties, identified and selected by both the injured worker and the employer, that are required when an injured worker is unable to return to their normal duties. Alternative duties need to be meaningful, and must comply with any medical restrictions outlined in the medical certificate and any agreed Return to Work Plan or Injury Management Plan.

Using this form
The following list of activities can be used as a means to identify the type of duties performed in an organisation. This information can also be provided to the injured worker's treating doctor to assist them in gaining an understanding of the injured worker's duties and the likely impact of any medical restrictions.

In the event that a worker is injured, this form is not to be used in isolation to identify alternative duties. Policies and/or associated procedures to identify alternative duties should be followed as outlined in either the insurer's or employer's injury management program.

Activities are listed in alphabetical order and cover a broad range of industry groups. You may select as many activities as necessary in order to describe the duties performed in your organisation. Duties that are performed that are not listed on this form can be detailed in the space provided at the end of this form.

Alternative duties and your workers compensation insurance
Calculating premiums for workers compensation insurance in Tasmania takes into account a number of factors, including the employer's ability to provide alternative duties to an injured worker.

Completion of this form by an employer wishing to obtain workers compensation insurance will:

- assist the insurer to assess the employer's ability to provide alternative duties available in their workplace
- ensure that employers with more than 50 workers fulfil their obligations under the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988; that is, if this employer accepts or renews an insurance policy, they must, within 60 days, identify and provide their insurer with a list of suitable alternative duties.

Employer Details:

Name of Employer	Policy No. (if known)	Contact Phone
Address	Suburb	Post Code
Major Business Activity	Number of Employees	

Please identify the potential alternative duties on the following pages that are available to an injured worker within your workplace. Please print X in the appropriate boxes by using a black or blue ballpoint pen only.

A

- accepting payment for goods & services by a variety of payment methods including invoicing
- accompanying aged & disabled persons during daily activities
- adjusting mist irrigation systems, shade & ventilation
- administering contracts, programs & projects
- administering first aid
- administering treatments such as massage to assist healing, prevent injury & promote relaxation
- advising clients on security requirements,
- recommending & designing security specifications
- advising customers on products, prices, delivery & warranties
- answering telephone calls & enquiries
- applying cleaning agents & washing articles to remove stains & dirt
- applying fertilisers, insecticides & herbicides to individual trees & general forest areas
- applying pesticides, herbicides & other chemicals
- applying plaster & cement coatings to walls
- applying protective & decorative finishes to metal products
- applying varnish, shellac, lacquer, stains & paint to surfaces
- arranging & handling instruments, medication & other dental requisites
- arranging appointments & collecting payments
- arranging supply of & storing flowers
- assembling & erecting scaffolding, rigging & barricades
- assembling components & sub-assemblies for further processing & to make finished products
- assembling, fabricating & installing electrical & electronic systems
- assessing clients needs & providing advice
- assessing health of patients/clients, planning & implementing health care requirements
- assisting children with intellectual, physical & behavioural difficulties
- assisting patients/clients in personal hygiene & dressing
- assisting patients/clients with mobility & communication needs
- assisting patients/clients with rehabilitation exercises & basic treatment
- assisting seamstresses to perform procedures & operations
- assisting with loading & transporting rigs
- attending accidents & providing pre-hospital care & transport

B

- baking bread, cakes & pastries
- balancing registers & preparing banking
- booking reservations & collecting payment
- booking tours, taxis & restaurants for guests
- building & installing fittings
- buying goods for resale & negotiating with suppliers

C

- carrying luggage & escorting guests
- checking cleanliness & operation of equipment & premises
- classifying, pressing wool & branding bales
- cleaning kitchens, utensils & preparation areas
- cleaning machines, plant & equipment
- cleaning machines, work areas, storage tanks & floors

- cleaning windows & other glass surfaces
- cleaning work areas & sanitising instruments
- cleaning, colouring, cutting & styling hair
- cleaning & cleaning used dishes, cutlery & glasses
- coaching & training sporting competitors
- collecting & recording growth, production & water quality data
- collecting seeds, outplanting & planting seedlings
- conducting investigations for clients
- conducting marriage ceremonies
- constructing, modifying and upholstering vehicle bodies
- controlling & extinguishing fires
- counting & recording money received
- cutting & connecting wiring & cables
- cutting & preparing leather, canvas & sailcloth
- cutting, planing, turning, shaping & sanding wood
- cutting, trimming & dressing meat, poultry & seafood

D

- delivering group exercise classes & one-on-one tuition in a variety of fitness activities
- delivering medications
- diagnosing electrical & mechanical faults
- digging holes & trenches,
- directing cranes
- dismantling engines & electrical systems
- drafting & preparing documents
- dusting & polishing furniture, fixtures & fittings

E

- engaging prospective buyers & determining buyers' requirements
- entering, processing & editing text & data
- erecting frameworks, roof frames, roofs & walls
- escorting people on tours
- establishing destinations & determining routes
- estimating food & labour costs
- examining & treating teeth & gums
- examining blueprints, wiring diagrams & specifications
- examining trees to assess their condition & determine treatment
- exercising animals
- explaining & enforcing safety regulations in hotels

F, G & H

- feeding & grading fish, & monitoring their growth
- filing correspondence & maintaining records
- fitting & testing components
- greeting clients & visitors
- grooming animals
- handling cash
- harvesting & packaging plants for sale & transport
- harvesting, sorting & packing produce into containers

I

- inspecting & grading products
- inspecting, preparing & cleaning animal cages & enclosures

RTWC need to be leaders that influence others

It is Expected that RTW Co-ordinates will:

- Be involved in training and educating line managers, supervisors and workers about injury management and return to work processes
- Actively promoting injury management and return to work processes and positively influencing worker perceptions i.e. remind workers of the benefits of work



Consequences of Being Off Work

Being out of work for extended periods of time is bad for a person's health



- Health Risk = smoking 10 packs of cigarettes per day
- Suicide in young men > 6 months out of work increased x 40
- Suicide rate in general increased x 6 in longer-term worklessness
- Health risk and life expectancy greater than many “killer diseases”
- Greater risk than most dangerous jobs

Benefits of Work

- Earlier this year the Australasian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine released its *Australian and New Zealand Consensus Statement on the Health Benefits of Work*.
- Some of the Consensus Statement's fundamental principles are:
 - work is generally good for health and wellbeing
 - long-term work absence have a negative impact on health and wellbeing
 - attempting to return to work after injury or illness face a complex situation
 - good outcomes are more likely when people understand the health benefits of work, and are empowered to take responsibility for their own situation



WorkCover has signed up as a supporter of the Consensus Statement and its recommendations

Consequences of Being Off Work

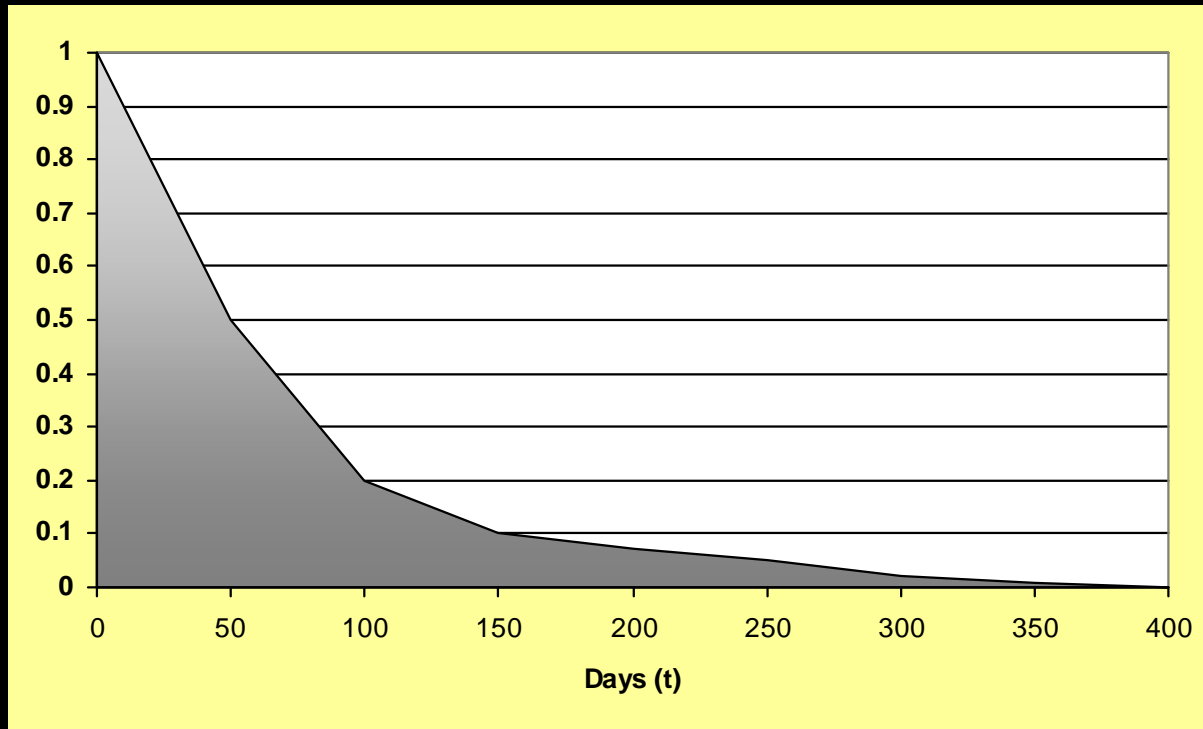


Figure 1. Likelihood of return to work after various length of time off work

The longer someone spends away from work, the less likely they will ever return

Psychological and Social Impacts on the Worker

Psychosocial impacts of work absence



- Depression
- Erosion of skills
- Decreased income and social status
- Loss of social support networks
- Decreased confidence
- Decreased sense of self-efficacy

How Can An RTWC Assist Injured Workers?

- Help create a supportive workplace environment - Optimistic workers are less likely to experience frequency or intensity of injury
- Encourage worker to be an active participant in return to work
- Reinforce the Benefit of work and the risks of being out of work
- Support workers to understand they should not expect to be completely better or pain free in order to successfully return to work
- Encourage the injured worker to seek advice and explanation about their health condition to leave them confident about self management
- Work with the worker to identify suitable duties and suggest ways tasks can be modified to accommodated the worker's condition
- Regularly communicate with the worker and encourage the worker to follow up with you as appropriate
- Ensure that the worker has sufficient information
- Be available to workers to discuss any issues

Look for opportunities to improve your RTW System

- Do you as a RTWC need further training.
- Training of line managers and supervisors in injury management and communication.
- The development of a system for obtaining regular feedback from employees with an injury, such as routine surveys.
- Undertaking a group process to identify a list of modified duties for injured workers.
- Development of the organization's policies and procedures. Improved incident investigation.
- Better systems of early reporting and communication.
- Specialist or external support for complex cases.
- The provision of ergonomic advice. Improved relationships with health care providers.
- Prepare a written list of available modified duties.
- Improved communication channels for people returning to work – eg a weekly catch-up, and access to senior staff if there are problems.
- Regular reporting and feedback on the injury management system.
- Regular meetings between the RTW coordinator, relevant supervisors, HR and claims staff.
- The development of a tick box list of essential functions of particular jobs for treating doctors to complete. This list should be available on the company website so that employees can take it to their doctors.

Further Resources

WorkCover Tasmania Publications

<http://www.workcover.tas.gov.au/resources>

- The Role of the Return to Work Co-ordinator
- Register of Alternative Duties
- Register of Training Providers
- Injury Management Program Guidelines
- Injury Management Policy Guidelines
- Return to Work and Injury Management Plan Guidelines
- Return to Work - Consensus Statement, on the Benefits of Work

To Register as a RTWC with WorkCover go to: www.workcover.tas.gov.au

WorkSafe Victoria Publications

<http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/>

and search for “return to work toolkit”



Questions ?





Thank you for your participation

Brad Parker - Assistant Director

