



**Vocational rehabilitation services - what's in it for me?**  
552

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## Overview

- Vocational rehabilitation basics
- Service types
- Remain at work
- Transitional work
- Return to work
- Quiz
- Q & A

### ○ Definition

- Individualized and voluntary programs and services to assist an eligible injured worker to return to work or remain at work

### ○ Benefits

- Injured worker — Feelings of self-worth stay high and ties to the job and work community stay strong
- Employer — Experienced worker remains productive and the costs associated with hiring and training a new employee are reduced

### ○ Vocational rehabilitation hierarchy

- Same job, same employer
- Different job, same employer
- Same job, different employer
- Different job, different employer

### ○ Accessing vocational rehabilitation services

- Contact the managed care organization (MCO) or
- Contact your local BWC customer service office

## Types of services

- Vocational rehabilitation case management
- Evaluation and assessment
- Physical conditioning
- Training
- Re-employment services
- Return-to-work incentives

## Return-to-work incentives

- Employer incentive contract
- Gradual return to work
- Job modifications
- Tools and equipment
- On-the-job training

## **Remain at work**

### **Remain-at-work goals**

- Safe and successful remain at work
- Safeguard injured worker's job
- Prevent lost time
- Avoid the effect that lost-time claims have on employer of record's premiums and productivity

## **Remain-at-work eligibility**

- Medical-only claim
- Employer, injured worker and physician of record (POR) verify need
- Services provided shall be charged to the employer's risk or paid out of pocket

## **Referrals for remain at work**

- Anyone can refer an injured worker for remain-at-work services by contacting a MCO or employer.
- An injured worker's participation in remain-at-work services is voluntary.

## **Services provided in RAW**

- Ergonomic study
- Functional capacity evaluation
- Job analysis
- Physical therapy (on-site or off-site)
- Occupational therapy (on-site or off-site)
- Physical reconditioning
- Transitional work
- Gradual return to work
- On-the-job training
- Job modification
- Tools and equipment
- Remain-at-work field case management

## **Cessation of remain-at-work services**

- A BWC, Industrial Commission of Ohio or court order disallows the claim.
- The claim changes to lost time.
- The injured worker is referred for vocational rehabilitation lost-time services.
- The lump sum settlement date becomes effective.

## **Employer could benefit from rehab-case management**

- Employer believes return to work (RTW) is beyond the employer's safe medical/vocational expertise.
- Employer is unsure how to assign safe productive work tasks.
- Employer/POR requests therapy at or off the work site.

**Employer could benefit from rehab-case management**

- Functional job analysis or ergonomic analysis has not been completed on the original job.
- Injured worker needs disease-process education combined with job task re-education to prevent re-injury.

**Employer could benefit from rehab-case management**

- Physician requests transitional work therapy.
- There are frequent call-offs by the injured worker related to the injury.
- Injured worker, employer or physician requests the services of a vocational case manager.

**Employer could benefit from rehab-case management**

- Injured worker has multiple claims.
- Injured worker has RTW, but is not progressing physically and/or advancing job tasks.
- There is a history of human resources issues with the injured worker.
- It is the injured worker's second attempt at RTW.

**Employer could benefit from rehab-case management**

- Physician does not progressively lift restrictions.
- There has been a history of treatment delays in the claim.

**Helping workers remain or return to work**

**What can you do to speed a worker's recovery, reduce lost time, reduce costs, and decrease workplace injuries in the future?**

**Transitional work**

- Develop a written plan with policies and procedures, processes, forms and a letter.
- Communicate this plan and make sure it is understood by the workers prior to an injury.
- Set expectations.
- The simpler the better; the more often they hear about it the better.

### **Developing a program**

- Owner and senior-manager participation
- Employee and union buy-in
- Policies and procedures
- Defined process
- Forms and letters
- Job analysis
- Training/communication
- Assigned roles and responsibilities
- Community resources

### **Safety/risk-management team**

- Directors of the RTW program:
  - Meet with department managers to reduce/prevent workplace injuries;
  - Report claims, review accident reports, visit the location and investigate;
  - Stay in contact with the injured worker;
  - Liaison with health-care providers;
  - Keep management informed.

### **Safety/risk-management team**

- Confer with worker and supervisor for suitable work tasks
- Monitor worker in program, staying within restrictions
- Schedule staffing/meetings
- Educate and communicate with co-workers
- Share successes

### **Relationship with your local medical providers**

- Locate good medical providers in your community.
- Create opportunities to improve your relationship with physicians, hospitals, clinics and urgent care centers.

### **Workers' benefits**

- Reduces the fear of re-injury
- Faster and more complete recovery
- Three times faster
- Maintains earnings, benefits and seniority
- Less apt to face physical deconditioning and loss of work skills

### **Job bank of transitional-work tasks**

- Create several light-duty job tasks a worker can perform in a short time.
- Create one each for upper- and lower-extremity injuries and back strain.

## Possible strategies

- Job modification
- Tools and equipment
- Gradual return to work

## What happens if we don't have any light-duty jobs?

- Work with your supervisors and employees to identify temporary work tasks.
- Confer with physical or occupational therapy providers to identify suitable tasks within the worker's capabilities.
- Identify a non-profit agency. ([www.melissadata.com](http://www.melissadata.com))

## What if my supervisors only want workers who are 100-percent fit for duty?

- Explain that some productivity from the team is better than none with the injured worker at home.
- Provide incentives for supervisors who assist injured workers during the period injured worker.

## RTW

- Claim with eight or more days of lost time
- Referrals from any source
- Eligible and feasible person who is not in the acute phase of medical treatment
- Services coordinated by vocational rehabilitation case managers
- Living maintenance or salary continuation

## RTW services

### RTW – Same employer

- Services
  - Vocational rehabilitation case management
  - Assessments
  - Physical conditioning
  - Training
  - RTW Incentives

### RTW – Different employer

- Services:
  - Vocational rehabilitation case management
  - Assessment
  - Physical conditioning
  - Training
  - Employment services
  - RTW incentives

## RTW – job retention

- Claim with eight or more days of lost time in which temporary total compensation has been paid.
- POR indicates job restrictions related to the claim.
- Employer indicates specific job-task issues.