Vocational Rehabilitation

Introduction

Vocational rehabilitation is the process of restoring the vocational functioning of a worker who experiences an industrial injury or occupational disease. It provides a comprehensive, focused program directed towards returning an injured worker to competitive employment. Vocational rehabilitation may help employers reduce claim costs by increasing return to work probability, reducing lost time, decreasing medical expenses and reducing the employer's risk.

Sections 4121.61 to 4121.69 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) and Sections 4123-18-01 through 4123-18-22 and applicable rules within chapters 4123-6 and 4123-17 of the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) pertain to workers' compensation vocational rehabilitation. According to OAC 4123-18-03, BWC is responsible for developing guidelines to aid in rehabilitation service delivery. Guidelines for MCOs are outlined in the MCO Policy Reference Guide. Self-insured employer guidelines are contained in BWC's Procedural Guide to Self-Insured Claims Administration.

As outlined in OAC4123-18-16 (A), employees of self-insured employers who opt to participate in a vocational rehabilitation program, and who are found to be both eligible and feasible to do so, shall be furnished vocational rehabilitation services through their employer. Such services shall be equal to or greater in quality and content than the services provided by BWC and the MCO. This rule obligates the self-insured employer to provide their injured workers with the opportunity to participate in individualized vocational rehabilitation programs**.**

If a self-insured employer who is participating in the rehabilitation surplus fund wishes to utilize vocational rehab services, the Disability Management Coordinator (DMC) in the BWC service office will approve/disapprove the vocational rehabilitation plans. The DMC will then process the reimbursement through the surplus fund. Bankrupt self-insured employers shall be assigned, by risk numbers, to an MCO.

Who is Eligible

An injured worker's participation in a vocational rehabilitation program is voluntary.

An injured worker is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services when the allowed injury creates a significant impediment to returning to employment or to maintaining employment (job retention), and one of the following is true:

- The injured worker is currently receiving temporary total compensation, non-working wage loss, permanent total compensation, wages in lieu of compensation (i.e. salary continuation), or scheduled loss under 4123.57(B), as of the date of referral;
- The injured worker has a lost-time claim (8 or more days off work due to the allowed injury);

- The injured worker has received a percentage permanent partial award or has been deemed MMI with documented physical limitations resulting from the allowed claim which create significant barriers to return to work at the proposed job goal;
- The currently working employee needs job retention services in order to maintain employment due to a significant, documented work-related problem caused by a lost time claim in which the injured worker has received compensation; or
- The injured worker has sustained a catastrophic injury and a vocational goal can be established.

An injured worker may be determined eligible, but services may not be feasible (see Feasibility Determination and Plan).

Referral

An injured worker should be considered for a vocational rehabilitation program if there is an impediment to returning to or maintaining employment. Also, when the injured worker does not readily respond to medical treatment alone, vocational rehabilitation should be considered as the injured worker approaches medical stability.

Anyone can refer an injured worker for vocational rehabilitation including BWC. Information or statements received about the injured worker's need for vocational rehabilitation services are considered referrals for vocational rehabilitation.

When it has been determined that vocational rehabilitation would be beneficial, the injured worker should be referred to a vocational rehabilitation case manager. The case manager helps to determine if the injured worker is eligible and/or feasible for a vocational rehabilitation program. If the injured worker is eligible and feasible for vocational rehabilitation and wishes to pursue a rehabilitation program the employer will work with the injured worker to set up a program.

When the review of a referral results in the decision that there is no reasonable probability that the injured worker will benefit from rehabilitation, the reasons for that decision and notification of the appeals process shall be given in writing to all parties to the claim. Facts supporting the decision should be adequately documented and explained to the injured worker and the other parties to the claim.

Job Retention Services

When being referred for job retention services, the injured worker may receive services if:

- There is an allowed lost time claim for which compensation has been paid; and
- The current work related problem is a direct result of the allowed conditions; and
- The physician of record and the employer provide written documentation describing problems with specific job tasks and why services are needed to maintain the injured worker's employment.

Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers

Vocational rehabilitation case management must be delivered by qualified providers. OAC 4123-6-022(C)(32) identifies the type of credentials a vocational/medical case manager must maintain. The provider shall hold and maintain one of the following credentials through a nationally recognized accreditation committee:

- Certified Rehabilitation Counselor;
- Certified Disability Management Specialist;
- Certified Rehabilitation Registered Nurse;
- Certified Vocational Evaluator;
- Certified Occupational Health Nurse;
- Certified Case Manager

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Feasibility Determination and Plan

The vocational case manager meets with the injured worker to assess the injured worker's current situation. Topics may include the injured worker's:

- Education
- Medical history
- Work history
- Incentives as well as disincentives for rehabilitation and employment
- Barriers to employment or program participation
- Next best steps regarding reemployment

An injured worker may be determined eligible, but may not be feasible for services. Feasibility for vocational services means that there is a reasonable probability that the injured worker will benefit from services at this time and return to work as a result of the services. While feasibility is assessed continuously throughout the vocational rehabilitation process, it is most carefully scrutinized before services are initiated to assure the highest probability of success.

The vocational rehabilitation case manager may schedule evaluations, as necessary, to further assess the appropriateness of vocational rehabilitation interventions and/or establish case direction.

Vocational Rehabilitation Plan

Once the injured worker is both eligible and feasible for vocational rehabilitation services, a written rehabilitation plan is developed outlining how the return to work goal is to be accomplished. These services occur as the injured worker becomes medically stable and

the physician of record indicates the worker is ready for an active vocational rehabilitation program focused on the goal of return to work.

A vocational rehabilitation plan is a written outline of the expectations of both the employer and the injured worker if the plan is to be successful the injured worker, the employer and the rehab case manager should all be in agreement of its contents. This plan establishes the injured worker's goals, what services are going to be utilized to accomplish these goals, who will provide the services, and when the services will take place and for how long. It is also important to include the POR when writing a vocational rehabilitation plan. The physician must be in agreement with the chosen services and provide prescriptions for services where necessary. The plan is to be signed by the injured worker and a copy given to all parties.

Where possible, rehabilitation plans should reflect that the injured worker will approximate a 40-hour work week, or that the injured worker participates at least 3 days per week in plan activities.

Return-To-Work Hierarchy

An attempt should be made to return the injured worker to employment to as close to pre-injury wages as possible to prevent increased wage loss costs. Research demonstrates that the use of the return-to-work hierarchy ensures the most cost effective, efficient and permanent re-employment of injured workers. In order to insure the most appropriate and cost efficient return to work, the vocational case manager shall consider and address each step of this hierarchy sequentially. The documentation should support why any step can be ruled out in the rehabilitation plan narrative. Skill enhancement, remedial or short-term training may be used at any level of the hierarchy, when appropriate, to aid injured workers in successfully returning to work.

The return-to-work hierarchy, Administrative Rule 4123-18-02, states that the goals of vocational rehabilitation are to return the injured worker to:

- Same job, same employer: The first goal is to return the injured or disabled worker to his or her former employer in his or her original job.
- Different job, same employer: To encourage the employer to modify the original job or to provide employment in a different job with that employer.
- Same job, different employer: To assist the injured worker in finding employment with a different employer in a related industry.
- Different job, different employer: To assist the injured worker in finding a new job in the same or another industry.

Amended Plans

A plan amendment is written when the initial rehabilitation plan does not result in employment and/or the vocational rehabilitation case manager identifies a new barrier prior to the completion of the current plan. An amended plan continues within the framework of the existing RTW goal or establishes a new one and outlines how the injured worker will proceed with the next steps in the vocational rehabilitation program.

Interruptions During Plan

OAC 4123-18-04(B) allows a vocational rehabilitation plan in progress to be interrupted due to an injured worker's medical instability. The medical condition causing the instability does not have to be related to the allowed condition. There are two types of plan interruption:

Medical Interrupt

A rehabilitation plan may be interrupted for no more than 30 days to allow the injured worker 's medical instability to resolve or to collect information about the condition. The vocational case manager will advise as to the appropriateness of continuing living maintenance during this 30 day period based on the injured workers' diagnosis and prognosis. If plan closure is determined other forms of compensation the injured worker may be eligible for should be made available.

Medical Hold

A Medical Hold is a temporary closure of the rehabilitation plan. It occurs when an injured worker experiences a medical event that is anticipated to last longer than the Medical Interrupt. The injured worker remains eligible for rehab plan services for up to two years.

Plan Closure Procedure

Closure of a vocational rehabilitation plan should occur after:

- the injured worker has been found to be eligible/feasible and has been notified of the decision but does not participate, or
- the injured worker was accepted into a plan, but for a variety of reasons did not begin the plan, complete the plan or failed to cooperate with the terms of the plan,
- all necessary services have been provided, goals have been obtained, the injured worker is employed, and the case follow-up period has ended, or
- the case is being closed as a Medical Hold.

A written determination shall be given on all referrals and will include the reason for the closure and the process to be followed should the decision be appealed. This notification should be sent to all parties to the claim.

Parties to the claim have the right to appeal a rehab case closure decision. During the established appeal period no further action should be taken on the vocational rehabilitation case. A closure may be rescinded during the appeal time period if the employer and injured worker agree to keep the vocational rehabilitation case open.

Careful consideration for closure should be taken to avoid premature closures. Once closed, an injured worker's rehab file should not be reopened within 30 days of the closure date unless documentation can be provided to justify a significant change in circumstances and eligibility still exists.

Compensation

Self-insured employers shall pay living maintenance or salary continuation (i.e. wages in lieu of compensation) directly to the injured workers where necessary while they are participating in a vocational rehabilitation plan.

If salary continuation is offered by the self-insured employer, an injured worker with a lost time claim may choose to receive either salary continuation or living maintenance during vocational rehabilitation. However, if temporary total or living maintenance has been paid in the claim, the injured worker must receive living maintenance when participating in vocational rehabilitation. Whenever the employer pays salary continuation, it must be paid at the injured worker's regular (full) salary level. After the plan is completed, an injured worker who has received salary continuation maintains the right to any future benefits, if otherwise eligible, such as Living Maintenance Wage Loss (LMWL) compensation.

If the injured worker fails, without good cause, to participate in his/her vocational rehabilitation plan, deductions from living maintenance payments equal to one seventh of the weekly payment can be made for each day of non-compliance.

In some circumstances, an injured worker could receive wages or other remuneration while participating in a vocational rehabilitation plan and receiving living maintenance. The checks must either be endorsed over to the self-insured employer or the employer shall deduct the payments from the injured worker's living maintenance payments or from future awards of compensation.

Termination of Living Maintenance

Occurs when:

- The injured worker has returned to work; or
- The injured worker has failed to fulfill the responsibilities outlined in the vocational rehabilitation plan; or
- The injured worker is unable to attain the goals of his/her vocational rehabilitation plan; or
- The injured worker has refused, without good cause, to accept a reasonable offer of employment within the vocational goal of the rehabilitation plan; or
- The injured worker is no longer living.

The termination of living maintenance shall not affect an injured worker's right to compensation or benefits under the Revised Code for which the injured worker otherwise qualifies.

Living Maintenance Wage Loss (LMWL) Compensation

According to OAC 4123-18-21, an injured worker with a date of injury on or after 8/22/86 who completes a rehabilitation plan, successfully returns to work and experiences a wage loss upon reemployment, is eligible for LMWL.

The wage loss must be a consequence of the physical and/or psychiatric limitations caused by the allowed conditions of the claim. The injured worker must submit medical documentation verifying these limitations at each six-month interval along with the request for continuation of LMWL.

The injured worker cannot voluntarily limit his or her income by choosing to work fewer hours or at wages below reasonable expectations, if more appropriate jobs are reasonably available within the local labor market. Wage statements must be submitted to verify the wage loss on a regular basis. If the injured worker has a substantial variation in income the wage documentation may be submitted on a quarterly basis.

An injured worker may receive up to a maximum of 200 weeks of LMWL, provided in accordance with ORC 4121.67(B), less any weeks of Wage Loss, provided in accordance with ORC 4123.56(B), that have been previously paid.

Appeals

Any decision that affects an injured worker's benefits or compensation may be appealed. OAC 4123-6-69 delineates the dispute resolution process for those self-insured employers who have a BWC approved Qualified Health Plan (QHP) to deliver medical services to their employees, including vocational rehabilitation. All self-insured employers with a QHP are required to have an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process. This ADR process includes vocational rehabilitation issues and affords due process regarding conflicts.

When there are disputed issues between the self-insuring employer and parties to the claim, the issues must be decided by the Industrial Commission (IC) as outlined in OAC 4121-3-13. The employee (or dependants) or the employer may file a motion with BWC describing the issue in dispute. BWC will prepare the claim and forward the claim to the IC within seven (7) days. BWC will also notify the opposing party when a motion is filed.

Injuries Sustained While Participating in a Vocational Rehabilitation Plan

Injured workers who sustain a new injury or occupational disease while participating in an approved vocational rehabilitation plan can file a claim. These claims should be filed only for new injuries or occupational diseases. Claims filed as a result of an injury sustained while participating in a rehabilitation plan should follow the normal claims processing procedures.

Glossary and Service Descriptions

The following section provides a listing of vocational rehabilitation terms and services. The services are underlined. Although not all inclusive, these services provide the case manager with a guide to best practices in vocational rehabilitation service provision and increase the likelihood of an injured worker's successful return to work. It is recognized that the case manager may find a need to provide further services which may not be listed in order to meet the individual needs of the injured worker.

Automobile Repairs
Services for necessary repairs on an injured worker's automobile for the sole purpose of allowing participation in rehabilitation program.

Automobile/Van Modification
This service allows for the modification of an injured worker's vehicle due to the injured worker's disability resulting from an allowed injury.

Body Mechanics Education
The Body Mechanics Education program instructs the injured worker on topics such as spinal anatomy, the use of proper body mechanics, pacing techniques, injury prevention, ways to manage pain and how lifestyles contribute to pain.

Biofeedback Training
Biofeedback training develops the injured worker's ability to control the autonomic (involuntary) nervous system and aids in pain management.

Child/Dependent Care
Child/dependent care is for the sole purpose of allowing the injured worker to participate in a rehabilitation program.

Counseling
Counseling assists injured workers in managing personal/emotional issues that interfere with vocational rehabilitation progress and present barriers to return to work. Professional counseling services that may be used in the course of rehabilitation plans include:

- **Adjustment Counseling:** Assist injured workers in overcoming disability related life changes, situational depression, and related return to work concerns.
- **Career Counseling:** Assists injured workers who require a substantial change in vocation due to post injury physical and emotional issues.

Dispute Resolution: Procedures developed to resolve medical disputes prior to filing an appeal.

Ergonomic Study
An ergonomic study is an analysis of how the worker responds when performing the job in relation to the work environment. It examines the "fit" between the worker and the job

requirements. An ergonomic study takes into account the worker's size, strength and ability to handle the tasks, tools and work environment. It is generally used to evaluate the risks of the job and to recommend job modifications.

Exercise Equipment

Exercise equipment is for the sole purpose of maintaining the injured worker's physical conditioning for rehabilitation plan participation when access to an exercise facility isn't available. The physician of record should recommend the equipment.

Gradual Return to Work

This program allows an injured worker to return to work on a graduated basis building up to a full-time work status usually within 13 weeks total per vocational rehabilitation referral date. The POR must review the plan to insure the process will be within the injured worker's restrictions and provide a release. The POR must then prescribe that the injured worker can return to work on a part-time basis of at least 20 hours a week and gradually increase to a full time schedule within 13 weeks total.

A Gradual Return to Work vocational rehabilitation plan should include documentation of the scheduled work hours. The scheduled hours to be reimbursed must be agreed upon. Both the employer and the injured worker should sign the plan to indicate agreement.

Payments to the injured worker can be either through continuing the living maintenance or paying the injured worker a salary. If the living maintenance method is chosen, payments shall not exceed the injured worker's initial living maintenance rate.

Home Modification

Home modification allows for the modification of an injured worker's home due to the injured worker's disability resulting from the allowed injury.

Job Analysis

A job analysis is the process of examining a job and collecting measurements while the job is being performed. It explains what the worker does, how the worker performs the work and what the outcomes of the work are. It identifies the essential functions of the job and describes the physical demands of the required tasks, working conditions, and the knowledge, skills and experience generally required to safely perform the job. A job analysis includes information about the tools and equipment used in performing the job.

Job Club

Job clubs are highly structured group meetings composed of job seekers and a facilitator. Participants cultivate skills through actively conducting their job search with training and guidance from the job club facilitator. This program aids a group of injured workers in obtaining job leads and teaches good job search performance.

Job Coach

A vocational specialist who provides on-site guidance, training and assistance to the injured worker focusing on job performance in the actual work situation. This

behaviorally based program concentrates on teaching specific instructions to assist in completing the job's required tasks and maintaining appropriate work behaviors.

Note: This service is customarily used with individuals who have traumatic brain injuries, psycho-behavioral conditions, catastrophic injuries or developmental disabilities. Employment should be secured first in order to utilize this service.

Job Modification

Job Modification is the removal or alteration of physical barriers that may prohibit an injured worker from performing the essential job functions. These barriers may also prevent the worker from obtaining or maintaining employment. It is generally used for return to work positions that are considered permanent. An actual on-site job analysis is usually necessary to begin the process of Job Modification. The case manager usually works with the employer, injured worker, POR and other professionals as appropriate to insure the suitability of the modification.

Job Placement and Development

A professional job seeking service that assists injured workers in locating jobs. Often, job placement specialists acquire and maintain ongoing relationships with employer contacts in the business community. Job placement specialists use their contacts within the business community to assist injured workers in matching their skills with jobs that may be modified. Job placement professionals direct the injured worker in their job search by providing job leads, setting job search procedures and goals, and closely following their client's progress correcting/redirecting the performance of the activities of the client along the way. Documentation should be provided detailing all job placement contacts.

Job Retention Services allow an injured worker with a previously allowed claim in which compensation was paid, who experiences a significant impediment to maintaining employment to be involved in a vocational rehabilitation program. This problem must be a direct result of the allowed conditions in the claim. A significant impediment to maintaining employment means that the functional problems would cause the worker to lose the current job without receipt of services.

Job Search

An individualized program for an injured worker who can't return to the original employer and has the transferable skills and physical capacities to return to an appropriate job in the labor force. Generally, the case manager coordinates the program and writes the number of job contacts required per week on the rehabilitation plan. The injured worker conducts a job search monitored by the rehabilitation case manager and or the job placement specialist.

Job Seeking Skills Training (JSST)

Specialized training includes activities that focus on developing skills to obtain employment. A group program that helps injured workers to develop job-seeking techniques such as interviewing skills and resume development. This service is usually used in conjunction with job search, job club, or job placement. JSST may be provided individually if waiting for a group program to begin would hinder case progress.

Nutritional Consultation/Weight Control

Services for weight reduction and weight maintenance when the condition presents a barrier to participation in plan services and return to work. These services must focus on behaviorally oriented nutritional counseling and not on quick weight loss techniques primarily based on dieting supplements or packaged foods.

Occupational Rehabilitation (Comprehensive Occupational Rehabilitation) *also known as Work Hardening*

A Comprehensive Occupational Rehabilitation program is focused on assisting the injured worker to return to the job while minimizing the risk of re-injury. It is interdisciplinary and individualized with a sound vocational direction and measurable outcomes. The program addresses, when appropriate, the reasonable accommodations or adaptations for the injured worker and the work environment. When possible, a specific job goal should be identified prior to services. This program must have CARF accreditation.

Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapy services focus on improving the injured workers job performance level, level of daily activities and physical activities for return to work. Although services should not be provided in the home, Occupational Therapy services may be provided at the injured worker's work site.

On-The-Job Training

On-the-job training allows an injured worker to obtain or upgrade vocational skills through actual work experience. This training should be provided under the close supervision of an experienced person skilled in the targeted job. The vocational rehabilitation plan narrative should be very specific as to the responsibilities of each participant and should include:

- An explanation of the targeted job and skills necessary to perform it;
- The POR's release;
- The training outline, a schedule of training costs and equipment;
- Signatures of the injured worker, case manager and the employer/trainer.

As a guideline, the On-the-Job Training program should not exceed the SVP (Specific Vocational Preparation) timeframes identified in the COJ (Classification of Jobs).

Pain Management Program (Interdisciplinary Pain Rehabilitation Program)

An interdisciplinary Pain Management program increases an injured worker's pain-management skills and physical activity to allow a return to work. The program must have a strong, well-integrated vocational component. Multidisciplinary services should include: medical services, physical/occupational therapies, nutritional counseling, pharmacological counseling, psychological services, and vocational counseling.

Physical Reconditioning, Unsupervised

Unsupervised Physical Reconditioning is provided at a health club, YMCA/YWCA, spa or nautilus facility and doesn't include supervision by a licensed physical therapist.

Physical Therapy
Active Physical Therapy within a vocational rehabilitation plan is provided after the receipt of acute treatment modalities. It is provided when the injured worker needs to increase overall physical capacities and attain maximum strength, endurance and range of motion for return to work. This service focuses on the total body and not just a specific injured body part. Although services should not be provided in the home, Physical Therapy services may be provided at the injured worker's work site through **Transitional Work On-Site Therapy Services (see page 14)**.

QHP (Qualified Health Plan) is a self-insured employer's managed care plan that must be approved by BWC prior to implementation. Employer's plans must be implemented according to the QHP Rules and the QHP Standards Agreement.

Relocation Expenses (Formerly Known as Mobility Grants)
Reimbursement for Relocation Expenses provides financial assistance to injured workers who have obtained employment and must relocate because the job location is beyond the reasonable expectation of daily commuting.

Situational Work Assessment
An evaluation of an injured worker's ability to perform specific job tasks using vocationally focused skills assessments which simulate a targeted job (or job family).

Successfully returned to work means that the injured worker is on the job, plan services have been completed and the rehabilitation plan is closed.

Tools and Equipment
This service provides for the purchase of Tools and/or Equipment (i.e. chairs, etc.) necessary for employment or participation in an approved vocational rehabilitation plan.

Training, Remedial (such as GED); Short Term (less than one year); Long Term (maximum of two years)
An organized form of instruction from an accredited academic, business and/or trade school. A comprehensive vocational evaluation, including a transferable skills assessment is helpful before submission of a plan for long-term training. All long-term training programs should be provided at schools with effective employment placement programs. Training plans should include a labor market analysis for the targeted job goal to show feasibility of RTW following the program. The vocational rehabilitation case manager usually submits a copy of the injured worker's official grade report at the end of each grade period to verify full time attendance and successful completion of course work. GED training should not be the only plan service in any rehabilitation plan. Where ever possible, training plans may be coordinated with Rehabilitation Services Commission.

Transitional Work On-Site Therapy Services
Transitional Work is a work-site program that provides an individualized interim step in the recovery of an injured worker with job restrictions resulting from the allowed conditions in the claim. The overall program is developed in conjunction with the

employer, the collective bargaining agent (where applicable), the physician of record, and rehabilitation professionals.

Transitional Work programs have been shown to be one of the most effective ways to help injured workers progressively perform real work tasks and thus maintain employment. The programs have been well received by workers who want to protect their employability, or ability to work, and by employers who wish to maintain their skilled work force and reduce disability-related costs.

An Occupational Therapist (OT) or Physical Therapist (PT) provides on-site Transitional Work therapy to the injured worker at the work site. This therapy assists the injured worker in progressively performing the duties of a targeted job. Reimbursable services may include such activities as administering treatment modalities and other duties aimed at improving physical function, work task analysis, evaluating the injured worker's progress and participating in staffings, as appropriate.

Unallowed Conditions

Unallowed conditions may be treated within a vocational rehabilitation plan, if they are clearly aggravating the injury, preventing healing, impeding rehabilitation, or are barriers to return to work. This treatment should be concurrent with plan services but not be the primary focus of the plan.

Vocational Evaluation

A vocational evaluation is a process, which gathers vocational information about an injured worker, usually through the use of real or simulated work, to assist in determining vocational direction. A transferable skills analysis is a necessary component of reimbursable vocational evaluations. The overall results are based on integrating the injured worker's physical capacities, medical, psychological, and vocational data with realistic vocational options which exist in the labor market.

Two Types of Vocational Evaluation:

- **Vocational Screening**
  Uses simple paper and pencil tests and transferable skills analysis. Relies primarily on vocational interview and client's self-reports of interests and job history.
- **Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation**
  Uses extensive client interview and vocational exploration. Uses psychometric testing which may include aptitude, dexterity, achievement and vocational interest testing. Uses transferable skills analysis and the use of commercial work samples or real work tasks.

Note: The administration of a Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation must be within the scope of practice of the service provider as authorized by his or her professional certification commission or licensure board. It is the responsibility of each professional to be aware of services that may or may not be within that scope of practice.

Vocational Exploration and Guidance

Vocational exploration and guidance assists the injured worker in formulation a new vocational direction when it is determined that the injured worker cannot attain the physical requirements necessary for the previously identified vocational goal. It is provided as a vocational rehabilitation case management professional service.

Vocational Rehabilitation is defined as the process of restoring the vocational functioning of workers who experience an industrial injury or occupational disease.

Vocational Rehabilitation Case Management is defined as the development and coordination of a variety of vocationally restorative services designed to restore the injured worker's functional capacities and employability. Case management involvement maximizes the injured worker's ability to return to work in a safe, early and cost-effective manner. Since some injured workers have difficulty in making this transition back to work, the specialized services of a Vocational Rehabilitation Case Manager may be needed to organize and plan this important goal. The case manager works with the injured worker, employer, supervisors, treating physician etc. to ensure timely and appropriate services. The provider shall hold and maintain one of the following credentials through a nationally recognized accreditation committee:

- Certified Rehabilitation Counselor;
- Certified Disability Management Specialist;
- Certified Rehabilitation Registered Nurse;
- Certified Vocational Evaluator;
- Certified Occupational Health Nurse;
- Certified Case Manager

A **voluntary limitation of income** means that the injured worker chooses to limit income for personal reasons as opposed to reasons related to the allowed injury. Voluntary income limitation occurs when more appropriate jobs, based on the injured worker's current skills, abilities and physical capacities, are reasonably available within the injured worker's labor market.

Work Adjustment, Facility Based or Employer Based

A specialized structured program that improves an individual's work behaviors, both job performance and social skills, needed for successful functioning prior to the injured worker's return to work. This program is designed to progress the injured worker toward objective measurable goals and is usually facility based. Specific behavioral objectives and progress should be documented and reviewed.

Work Conditioning

A Work Conditioning program involves an individualized treatment program focused on regaining optimal function, prevention, and return to work goals. The program goals should address improvements in cardiopulmonary, neuromuscular, and musculoskeletal functions. The program incorporates job simulation tasks and is usually used when there is a vocational goal (job title) although the injured worker does not have a specific job to return to. When appropriate, the program addresses reasonable accommodations for the worker and adaptations to the work environment.

Work Hardening
(See Occupational Rehab)

Work Trial
A Work Trial program permits an injured worker to attempt a return to work in the original job or at a new job with either the same employer or a new employer. It allows an employer to test, evaluate and observe the worker at the actual job prior to hiring. The case manager usually will monitor and document the injured worker's progress based on reports from the injured worker's direct supervisor at the workplace.