	<b>REHABILITATION FOR WORK AND RETURN TO WORK PROGRAM</b>	<b>Document No:</b>	<b>WHS-PRO-040</b>
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## 1. Purpose

The aim of this procedure is to ensure that:

- Reasonable effort is made to provide safe and healthy workplaces for ACBC workers
- Reasonable steps are taken to prevent further injuries
- Rehabilitation and Return to Work commences as soon as possible after an injury/illness
- Injured workers are supported by their supervisor and co-workers during the Return to Work process

## 2. Scope

This procedure applies to all ACBC Agencies. It covers all workers at ACBC and ACBC controlled premises.

## 3. Related Documents

[ACBC Work Health & Safety Policy](#)

[ACBC Rehabilitation for Work and Return to Work Guidelines](#)

Australian Capital Territory: Workers Compensation Act 1951

Workers Compensation Regulation 2002

New South Wales:

Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998

Workers Compensation Regulation 2010

Queensland

Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003

Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Regulation 2003

Victoria:

Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013

Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Regulations 2014

Accident Compensation (Occupational Health and Safety) Act 1996

Accident Compensation Regulations 2012

## 4. Definitions

### Rehabilitation for Work

Rehabilitation for work is the process of returning a worker, who has suffered an injury or illness, to the workplace with some or all of their work capacity restored.

### Return to Work Program

A Return to Work Program is a documented set of general procedures, which provides an outline of how injuries are managed at our workplaces and the assistance available to help injured workers to remain at or return to work.

### Return to Work Plan (Personal Injury Plan)

A Return to Work Plan sets out how an injured worker will be returned to work. This is specific to the injured worker.

### Illness

A work related physical illness such as asbestosis or occupational overuse syndrome (RSI), or a psychological illness such as stress, which has been confirmed by a medical practitioner.

**Workers Compensation Agent**

The Workers Compensation Agent is the insurance company that administers the Workers Compensation Scheme on behalf of the Workplace Authority.

These are as follows:

Jurisdiction	Workers Compensation Agent
Australian Capital Territory	Catholic Church Insurances Limited
New South Wales	Catholic Church Insurances Limited
Queensland	WorkCover Queensland
South Australia	Catholic Church Insurances Limited
Tasmania	Catholic Church Insurances Limited
Victoria	Gallagher Bassett Services Workers Compensation Vic Pty

**Supervisor**

The Supervisor is a Manager, Coordinator or Team Leader, who is responsible for the day-to-day supervision of the injured worker.

**Case Manager**

On sites where there is no Return to Work Coordinator, the Case Manager is a person on site, who the applicable agency head has appointed, to liaise with the injured worker and the Return to Work Coordinator.

**RTW Coordinator**

The Return to Work Coordinator is a worker, who has completed the approved training. At ACBC the RTW Coordinators are as follows:

Agency	Return to Work Coordinator
Secretariat for Social Justice Caritas Australia (incorporating Catholic Earthcare Australia)	Volunteers Coordinator, Caritas Australia
General Secretariat Media and Communications Department National Centre for Pastoral Research Office of the Business Manager Digital Technology Office Facilities and Maintenance Team Finance Office Office for Employment Relations Policy and Research Department Secretariat for Canon Law Secretariat for Doctrine and Morals Secretariat for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations Secretariat for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry Australian Catholic Office for Film and Broadcasting National Centre for Evangelisation (incorporating the Catholic Enquiry Centre) Office for Clergy Life and Ministry Office for Lay Pastoral Ministry Office for the Participation of Women Office for Youth Secretariat for Life, Family and Public Engagement Secretariat for Liturgy National Office for Liturgy Secretariat for Social Justice Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office Catholic Social Services Australia Disability Projects Office	Employment Relations Advisor, Office for Employment Relations

Office for Social Justice Secretariat for Relations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Secretariat for the Plenary Council Plenary Council Facilitation Team	
Secretariat for Catholic Education National Catholic Education Commission Secretariat	Manager Governance and Corporate Services National Catholic Education Commission Secretariat

## 5. Responsibilities

### Injured/ Ill Worker

The injured or ill worker must:

- Report the injury or illness as soon as possible to the Supervisor
- Consult a medical practitioner and obtain a WorkCover Medical Certificate (Certificate of Capacity or First Medical Certificate)
- Participate in a Return to Work program
- Keep in touch with the Case Manager or the Return to Work Coordinator if on site
- Comply with injury management and Return to Work Plans

### Supervisors

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that:

- They investigate reported accidents and work related illnesses and implement the recommended action(s) to prevent recurrence
- They report injuries and work related illnesses to the RTW Coordinator
- They display in their workplaces the name and contact details of the RTW Coordinator
- They appoint a Case Manager to liaise with the injured worker and the RTW Coordinator (on sites where there is no RTW Coordinator)
- They cooperate with the Case Manager and the RTW Coordinator to provide suitable duties for the injured or ill worker
- They support the injured or ill worker while they are participating in a Return to Work Program

### Workers and Co-workers

Workers should:

- Assist their Supervisors in determining the most suitable action(s) to be taken to prevent a recurrence of the injury or illness
- Support the injured or ill worker while they are participating in a Return to Work Program

### Case Managers

Where a Case Manager has been appointed, they are responsible for:

- Remaining in regular contact with the injured or ill worker
- Obtaining any documentation required from the injured or ill worker (e.g. WorkCover Medical Certificates, receipts for medical expenses, claim forms etc.)
- Forwarding documentation to the RTW Coordinator

- Assisting the RTW Coordinator in developing a Return to Work Plan for the injured or ill worker
- Assisting the RTW Coordinator in monitoring the Return to Work Plan

*Note: Case Managers are not expected to liaise with Workers Compensation Agents or medical practitioners. Case Managers must forward these queries to the RTW Coordinator.*

### **Return to Work (RTW) Coordinator**

The role of the RTW Coordinator is to:

- Coordinate the Return to Work Program at their allocated sites
- Liaise with the injured or ill worker, medical practitioners, Supervisors and Workers Compensation Agents (and Case Managers) to develop a Return to Work Plan for the worker
- Monitor the progress of Return to Work Plans
- Consult with Supervisors to determine suitable alternate duties for the injured or ill worker
- Forward required documentation to the Workers Compensation Agent
- Manage Workers Compensation Claims

## **6. Return to Work Process**

There are two actions that must be taken in managing work related injuries and illnesses:

The first is to investigate the causes and to take appropriate action to prevent them from happening again. (Refer to the procedure for Reporting and Investigation of Accidents, Incidents and Hazards). The second is to assist the injured or ill worker to return to work.

The focus on return to work is intended to enable the injured or ill worker to know where they are headed and what is expected of them. The aim of rehabilitation is to enable the injured or ill worker to return successfully to their pre-injury/illness employment and to resume their pre-injury/illness lifestyle.

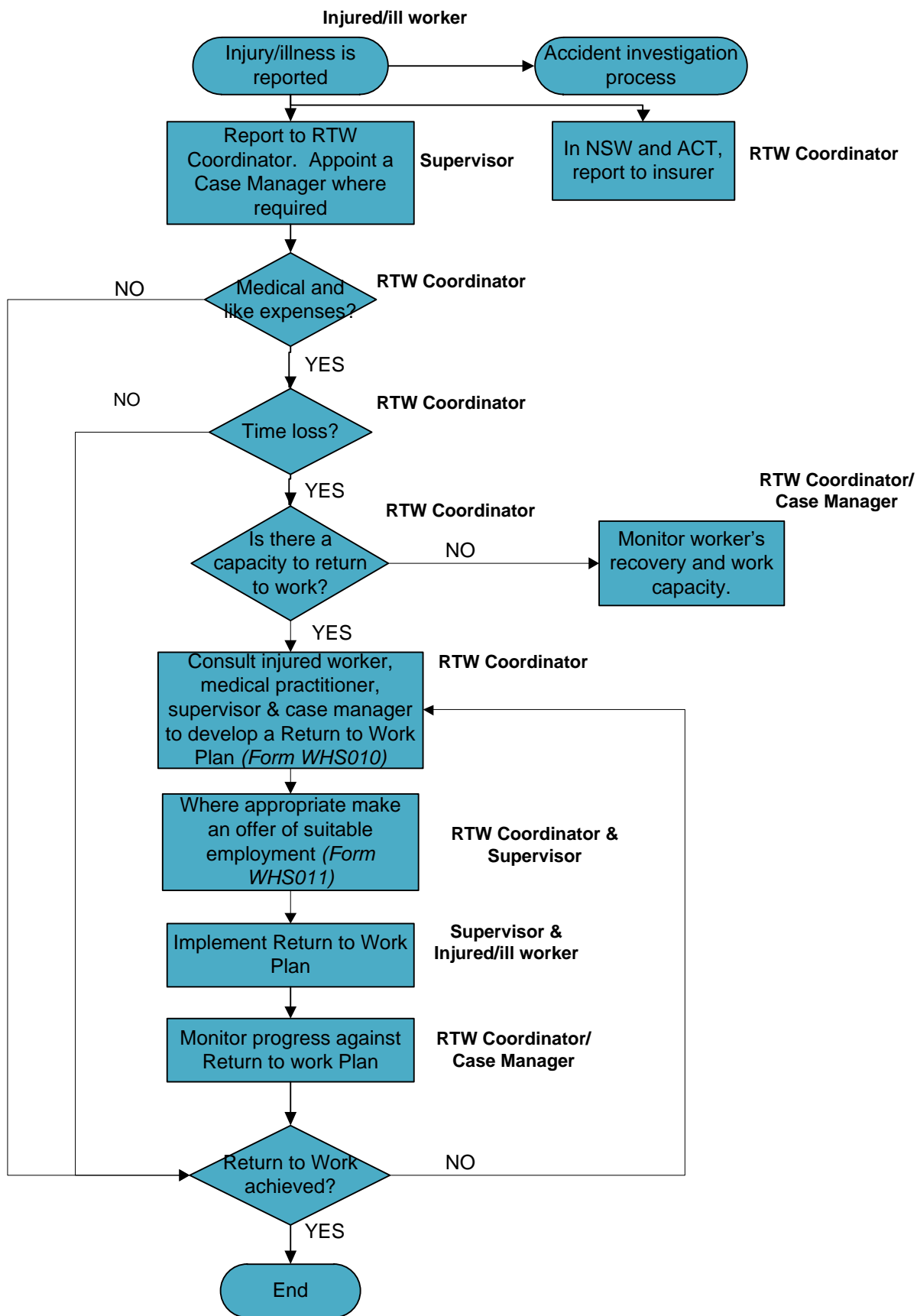
The general process is shown in the flowchart below.

1. The injured worker must report the injury to the Supervisor
2. The Supervisor must report the injury to the RTW Coordinator immediately.
3. The RTW Coordinator must inform the Workers Compensation Agent within 48 hours, if this is likely to become a Workers Compensation claim.
4. The RTW Coordinator and Supervisor, in consultation with the injured or ill worker, should determine whether the worker is expected to return to work within seven (7) days. The worker may not require any assistance to return to work, or may only need medical expenses to be paid.
5. The applicable agency head at the site must appoint a Case Manager if there is no RTW Coordinator on site.
6. The Case Manager or RTW Coordinator should advise the injured or ill worker to consult the medical practitioner of their choice, and obtain a WorkCover Medical Certificate.
7. The injured or ill worker is entitled to make a Workers Compensation Claim. The RTW Coordinator will manage this. (See procedure for managing Workers Compensation Claims)
8. The RTW Coordinator must request the injured or ill worker to grant authority to their treating practitioner to discuss the injury or illness with them. This has to be in writing either on the WorkCover form or on an Authority to Release Medical Information ([WHS012](#)).
9. The RTW Coordinator must read the WorkCover Medical Certificate and determine whether the injured or ill worker has a work capacity.
10. If there is no work capacity, the RTW Coordinator or Case Manager should monitor the progress of the injured worker. They should remain in regular contact with the injured or ill worker and the treating practitioner, in order to keep informed on how the injury is being managed, and at what point there will be a work capacity. (See [WHS013](#) - Sample letter to treating practitioner)
11. If there is a work capacity, the RTW Coordinator, in consultation with the injured or ill worker, the treating practitioner and the Supervisor, must develop and document a Return to Work Plan ([WHS010](#)).
12. The Return to Work Plan must take into account any work restrictions stated on the WorkCover Medical Certificate. The Return to Work Plan should include an offer of suitable employment

(WHS011) such as:

- A gradual return to pre-injury duties, starting with reduced hours
  - Similar duties at a different location
  - Modification of the workplace to enable a return to pre-injury duties
  - Suitable duties which are different to pre-injury duties
  - The injured or ill worker, their treating practitioner and their Supervisor, must agree to the Return to Work Plan.
13. The RTW Coordinator must ensure that the injured or ill worker has access to approved providers of Work rehabilitation services.
  14. The Supervisor of the injured or ill worker must ensure that the Return to Work Plan has been implemented.
  15. The RTW Coordinator, with the assistance of the Case Manager and the Supervisor, should monitor the progress of the Return to Work Plan.
  16. The Return to Work Plan must be reviewed and updated regularly to take into account any changes in work restrictions.
  17. If an injured or ill worker is unlikely to be able to return to work, the RTW Coordinator must advise the Workers Compensation Agent as soon as possible, to discuss possible courses of action.

## RETURN TO WORK PROCESS



## 7. Working with Treating Practitioners

Medical records are confidential and treating practitioners are not permitted to discuss information concerning a patient without the patient's written consent.

However, workers compensation claim forms have a section requesting the injured or ill worker to sign their authority to release medical information. This applies to any provider of medical and hospital services. A copy of this should be given to the treating practitioner before discussions with them regarding the injured or ill worker. If there is no claim form, [WHS012 – Authority to Release Medical Information](#) can be used.

The treating practitioner can assist a return to work by:

- Explaining the type of injury and its effects
- Giving information on typical treatments for that injury, frequency and duration of treatment
- Indicating the likely date of return to work and advising on whether an earlier date is possible with workplace support and suitable duties
- Providing advice on whether the worker could return to pre-injury duties if the job were changed or hours reduced
- Providing advice on whether the worker is able to drive
- Providing information on any restrictions (e.g. weights which may be lifted, time for sitting and standing, bending etc.), rest breaks, level of supervision, environmental factors
- Providing advice on whether any medications taken could interfere with ability to work safely
- Advising on any aids and appliances that would be useful to the injured or ill worker

## 8. Working with Workers Compensation Agents

It is important to involve the Workers' Compensation Agents in the return to work process as they have significant resources and expertise in returning injured workers to work.

The Workers Compensation Agent can:

- Provide advice on claim related matters
- Explain rights and responsibilities under the law of employers and workers
- Answer questions regarding workers' claims or return to work
- Assist with the preparation of return to work plans, including offers of suitable employment
- Provide advice on appropriateness of occupational rehabilitation services, and assist with referral and monitoring where appropriate
- Organise independent medical examinations to obtain further advice regarding a return to work
- Provide information on the Workers Compensation system

There are legal obligations for employers and Workers Compensation Agents alike with regard to lodging claims and reporting injuries. Information on this is available from WorkCover websites in each state and territory.

## 9. Confidentiality

Injured or ill workers and treating practitioners must be assured that the information that they have given to assist with return to work programs will be kept confidential. This is critical to gaining their full cooperation.

Any information obtained regarding an injured or ill worker should be kept in a secure place (e.g. a locked cabinet). WorkCover and RTW Coordinator activities should be recorded and maintained in a separate file to the worker's personnel file, so that access is restricted.

## 10. Victimisation

Participation in a Return to Work plan must not prejudice an injured worker's opportunities for promotion, training or professional development.

## 11. Records

WorkCover Medical Certificates/ WorkCover Certificates of Capacity  
Workers Compensation Claim form (WorkCover)  
Initial Notification of Injury & Disease form (CCI)  
[Incident/hazard reporting and investigation form \(WHS009\)](#)  
[Return to Work Plans \(WHS010\)](#)  
[Offers of suitable employment \(WHS011\)](#)  
[Authority to Release Medical Information \(WHS012\)](#)  
[Letter to Treating Practitioner \(WHS013\)](#)

## 12. Further Information

The WorkCover authority in your state or territory has guides and sample documents.

ACT: [www.worksafe.act.gov.au/workers\\_compensation](http://www.worksafe.act.gov.au/workers_compensation)  
NSW: [www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/workers-compensation-claims](http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/workers-compensation-claims)  
NT: [www.worksafe.nt.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.worksafe.nt.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx)  
Qld: [www.worksafe.qld.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au)  
SA: [www.rtwsa.com/](http://www.rtwsa.com/)  
Tas: [www.workcover.tas.gov.au/](http://www.workcover.tas.gov.au/)  
Vic: [www.workcover.vic.gov.au](http://www.workcover.vic.gov.au)  
WA: [www.workcover.wa.gov.au](http://www.workcover.wa.gov.au)