

THE DYNAMIC DOZEN

12 Best Practices Checklist for a Winning Return-to-Work Program

Consistently follow the 12 best practices listed below to have a winning return-to-work (RTW) program – these practices fall into two categories of what employers should do:

Ahead of an injury



After an injury



Use this checklist to see if your RTW program meets best practices

NOTE: One key element that must be in place before a RTW program can be effective – You and your managers must be committed to supporting RTW efforts.

Ahead of an injury

Building the RTW infrastructure before injuries occur is crucial – 6 key steps

- 1. Designate someone to coordinate RTW activities
- 2. Establish a written return-to-work policy
- 3. Train supervisors and continually communicate your RTW policy to employees
- 4. Pre-plan how you will work with Health Care Providers (HCPs)
- 5. Have essential functions job descriptions with physical demand breakdowns
- 6. Maintain an inventory of potential light/modified duty assignments

After an injury

Once you have laid the RTW infrastructure, when an accident happens, you are prepared to tackle what should happen post-injury – 6 key steps

- 7. Frequently communicate with the injured employee right after the injury is reported and throughout the RTW process
- 8. Take an active role in discussing RTW with your insurer/claims adjuster
- 9. On a case-by-case basis, make every reasonable attempt to accommodate HCP light/modified duty releases in meaningful transitional employment
- 10. Extend light/modified duty “reasonable job offers” in writing and tailor to individual situations while making sure tasks assigned meet HCP restrictions
- 11. Monitor progress when the injured employee comes back to work
- 12. Investigate each incident in order to prevent re-injury and improve on-going safety practices for all employees