

Please note

This information is for guidance only and is not to be taken as an expression of the law. It should be read in conjunction with the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*, the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Regulations 2011* and any other relevant legislation. Go to www.thelaw.tas.gov.au

This guide was produced by staff from WorkSafe Tasmania.
We welcome your feedback on this guide. Send to: workcover@justice.tas.gov.au

Workplace rehabilitation services

This information sheet provides information about the definitions of prescribed workplace rehabilitation services and helps identify the services that workplace rehabilitation providers must be accredited to deliver.

Workplace rehabilitation providers and services

A workplace rehabilitation provider means an organisation that is accredited under the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 to provide workplace rehabilitation services. The workplace rehabilitation services that are prescribed under the Act are very specialised and must be delivered by people who have the appropriate qualifications, experience and expertise. Accredited workplace rehabilitation providers must have systems in place for ensuring all their staff are appropriately qualified and experienced.

Workplace rehabilitation services are identified as:

- initial workplace rehabilitation assessment
- assessment of the functional capacity of a worker
- workplace assessment
- job analysis
- advice concerning job modification
- rehabilitation counselling
- vocational assessment.

The following are explanations of workplace rehabilitation provider services.

Initial workplace rehabilitation assessment

Service description

Examining the worker's injury, usual job and duties, current medical situation (including psychosocial factors), education, employment history and workplace factors to determine, and establish, a plan to address the worker's and employer's rehabilitation needs.

Activities

- Assessing the worker's and employer's needs.
- Consulting with the medical practitioner and treating professionals.
- Making workplace visits to identify/negotiate suitable duties, and the development of an injury management plan where a specific workplace assessment is not indicated.

Functional capacity assessment

Service description

Objectively measuring the injured worker's existing work capacity against specific and relevant work demands. In assessing function, the worker's skills and abilities are implicitly evaluated. Known predictors of return to work outcomes must be incorporated to maximise the functional assessment's contribution to the return to work process.

A functional assessment can be performed as a stand-alone assessment or as a component of a workplace assessment.

Activities

- Identifying the worker's current work capacity to develop individualised pre-injury/suitable duties or alternate vocational options.
- Providing a safe upgrading commensurate with improving work capacity.
- Discussing with the nominated treating medical practitioner to encourage appropriate medical certification and more precise workplace capacities and restrictions.
- Identifying suitable duties options.
- Establishing a vocational goal, if a worker is unable to return to their pre-injury job.
- Identifying any return to work barriers (including sub-maximal effort).

Workplace assessment

Service description

The worker must participate in the workplace assessment. The assessor must determine if the proposed duties are within the worker's current work capacity and that the worker can perform all proposed duties safely.

The purpose of the workplace assessment is to design an injury management plan that is precisely matched to the worker's current work capacity, providing for safe upgrading of duties commensurate with improving capacity. A workplace assessment would necessarily include components of a functional assessment to determine capacity for relevant work tasks.

A workplace assessment includes:

- the worker performing the relevant work tasks
- components of a functional assessment to determine capacity for relevant work tasks.

The workplace assessment findings are discussed with the nominated treating medical practitioner to assist appropriate certification and concurrence with the injury management plan.

Activities

- Identifying the critical physical, psychological, social, environmental and organisational demands and risk factors of all relevant work tasks.
- Determining the employer's capacity and willingness to offer suitable duties.
- Facilitating a job match of the injured worker's functional capacity with appropriate components of the pre-injury job or other suitable duties.
- Identifying methods of temporarily or permanently modifying/mitigating the work demands to facilitate a safe return to work.
- Identifying suitable duties that will increase the worker's tolerances and work capacity.
- Making workstation assessments.

Job analysis

Service description

Analysing the critical physical and psychological demands of a task or occupation to ascertain if they are within the worker's capacity and if any accommodations need to be made.

The findings are discussed with the nominated treating medical practitioner to assist appropriate certification and are encompassed in the injury management plan including a general description of the job, essential and non-essential functions, information on the working environment, and specifications of the job demands.

Additional recommendations for job modifications may also be made.

Activities

Gathering information on physical demands by:

- taking digital pictures and video
- measuring and observing job tasks
- reviewing existing job descriptions
- interviewing supervisors and employees.

Gathering information on psychological demands by:

- administering work environment scales eg MOOS
- psychological components of job analysis such as: workload, role clarity and ambiguity.

Job modification

Service description

Assessing aids, equipment needs and/or modification of the physical work environment, the management systems of the job, or the work practices to help achieve return to work.

Activities

- Providing advice about aids, equipment and/or modification including discussion, education and negotiation with worker/employer/return to work coordinator and, if applicable, union.
- Organising the supply of equipment and ensuring that the injured worker can safely use the equipment.

Rehabilitation counselling

Service description

This includes vocational counselling and adjustment to disability counselling. This comprises counselling the worker throughout the course of workplace rehabilitation, and focussing on their rehabilitation needs. Counselling is aimed towards overcoming barriers to remaining at work or returning to work.

Activities

- Determining counselling needs.
- Providing supportive, educational and motivational counselling conducted throughout service delivery.
- Helping the injured worker maximise function and manage disability and adverse events.
- Providing counselling to identify suitable job options.

Vocational assessment

Service description

Assessing the worker to identify vocational options and recommend strategies to achieve the vocational options. Vocational assessment services can range from brief vocational screening through to comprehensive vocational assessment and counselling, depending on the worker's circumstances.

Realistic vocational options are identified by analysing the worker's work profile and matching the work profile with a suitable work environment. The work profile includes a description of the worker's transferable skills, abilities, aptitude, interests, preferences, restrictions and work capacities.

Job options are then analysed for their match with the worker's profile such as work requirements, work culture and availability within the accessible labour market. The worker's pre-injury wage and status is also considered when making the match. If the match is incomplete, skills acquisition is considered through practical or formal training modes.

Activities

- Identifying transferable knowledge, skills and abilities based upon previous employment history, hobbies, interest and educational achievements.
- Identifying the need for vocational retraining, job search skills training and vocational counselling.
- Re-integrating the worker into the workplace through work trials and work placement based experience.
- Providing psychometric testing to clarify an individual's level of literacy, numeracy, cognitive ability, English language competency and capacity to learn new skills.