

2021

Supporting Your Injured Employee

A Practical Guide For Employers

As an employer, you play a vital role in your injured employee's recovery. It's important to understand what you can do to support your employee and how you can minimise the impact on your business.

In this resource, we've provided practical information on what you can do to support your employee as they recover from their injury.

Benefits of recovery at work: your employee retains knowledge, skills and their role at work. They feel like they're being cared for and valued by you.

Benefits for your business: better recovery experience for your employee which helps you return to business as usual. Thriving people, thriving business.



**He Kaupare. He Manaaki.
He Whakaora.**
prevention. care. recovery.

Start the conversation

Whether your employee is injured at home or in the workplace, their absence will be felt by your business, and so it makes sense to be supportive of their recovery at work, where appropriate.

Talking about how you keep your staff safe from injury and how you support recovery in the workplace when someone is injured, is helpful. Add these topics to your regular meetings for discussion – we've outlined how to create a Recovery at Work plan on page 4.

Helping your employee recover at work

Best practice shows injury rehabilitation is more successful when your employee can be at work during their recovery. Identifying suitable duties across your workplace can enable this process. You'll find information to help you with this on your employee's medical certification (see page 6). We've also provided information to help you identify suitable duties on page 7.

We're here to help

If you need help and want to talk to us, or your employee's treatment provider, please get your employee's consent first.

When you call us, please make sure you have the claim number handy (you can find this on the ACC45 form or Medical Certificate). Helpful information to share with us includes:

- Who is the key contact in your workplace?
 - What suitable duties you have available for your injured employee.
 - How you can accommodate your employee to be at work while they recover from their injury.
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Helping your employee to recover at work: the process

Your employee is injured

- Your employee must let you know they've been injured.
- Make sure they seek treatment as soon as possible.
- Their treatment provider will lodge a claim with us.

If the injury happens at work: check they've reported the accident and how it happened.
You can log in to MyACC for Business for claim details for work injuries.



Open, regular communication with your employee

- Ask how they're doing, and how the injury is impacting them and their family.
- Check in to see what's happening with their treatment and what's next.
- Get a copy of their claim form and/or medical certificate.
- Set and agree expectations about how you'll support their recovery at work.



Start the recovery at work conversation

- Talk about the tasks and demands of their job.
- Check what their medical certificate advises and match tasks with their functional capability.
- If they can't do their usual job, think about suitable duties – this could be modifying duties, work hours, or environment so they can be safe at work while they recover.



Is your employee able to work?

Yes – fully fit



Continue to check in with them as they fully recover.



Yes - fit for selective work



Develop a Recovery at Work plan.



No – fully unfit



Give your employee information about the workplace, their job and suitable duties. They then give this information to their treatment provider so a Fit for Selective Work certificate can be issued where appropriate.



Monitor your employee's recovery at work

Once your employee has resumed full duties and hours at work, continue to check in with them to see how they're doing and if they need any support.

If you need help at any point, call us on 0800 101 996.

Create a Recovery at Work Plan

A Recovery at Work plan details what will be done, by when and by whom, to help your employee to remain at work while they are recovering from injury.

This plan needs to be developed with your employee and is in line with the advice from their treatment provider (usually outlined in their medical certificate).

Five steps to creating a Recovery at Work plan

1 Talk with your employee

- Ask your employee how they're doing and let them know you're here to support them. You need to understand their needs and how they want to approach their recovery, which may include involving a support person.
- Set clear expectations about responsibilities, such as providing medical certificates, regular updates and advising early when things change. Seek their written consent so you can speak to us and/or treatment provider, if you need to.
- Clearly understand the physical and cognitive demands of their day-to-day job.
- If your employee is certified fully unfit or fit for selected work, ensure they're invited to work meetings or social events - keep their connection to work going even if they're unable to attend for work tasks.

2 Consider suitable duties your employee can do

- What aspects/tasks of their day-to-day job can they do?
- Consider how you might modify the tasks, or the environment, or work hours to enable your employee to be able to work.
- Look for other options within the business if your employee can't perform their usual tasks.
- Proposed duties must match the advice on the medical certificate.

3 Contact their treatment provider or ACC if you need support

- Once you've identified suitable duties and agreed how you'll support your employee's recovery, ask your employee to give this information to their treatment provider at their next appointment. This is especially important if your employee is certified Fully Unfit for Work, so that the treatment provider can consider certifying your employee Fit for Selected Work.
- Ask your employee about the advice the treatment provider has given them. If you need more clarity or information, you might wish to ask the treatment provider about the injury as it relates to their ability to work, including timeframes for recovery.
- Call us on 0800 101 996 if you need help. We'll provide advice or refer for a professional vocational service, if needed.
- Your employee must let us know if they're paid for any hours by their employer(s) while they have entitlement to weekly compensation payments. This will ensure their payments are calculated and paid correctly.

4 Discuss and manage a Recovery at Work plan with your employee

- Discuss and agree with all parties the details of your plan – including duties, any necessary accommodations, hours, breaks etc.
- Write down those agreed duties, actions, responsibilities, and timeframes, so everyone is clear who is doing what, and when. Include regular reviews of this plan to ensure things stay on track.

5 Once your employee has returned to usual hours and duties at work

- Stay in regular contact with your employee to ensure they have recovered and can sustainably continue to manage their usual job.

Medical Certification

What is a medical certificate?

A medical certificate is used if your employee needs time off work because of their injury. We need one before any weekly compensation can be paid to your employee. If your employee needs time off because of their injury, general practitioners (GPs) and nurse practitioners can certify this.

What to expect

- An ACC45 Injury Claim Form will be issued during the first visit to a treatment provider and is used to lodge the claim.
- The medical practitioner can certify up to two weeks off work on this form (note: a physiotherapist cannot certify time off work).
- An ACC18 Medical Certificate will be issued at subsequent visits to the provider. Work capacity will be noted as fully unfit, or as fit for some/selected work.
- The medical certificate describes the injury and the impact the injury has on function – expressed as ‘restrictions’ for work.
- You should expect to see this information on the ACC45/ACC18 form:
 - Date of accident
 - Diagnosis (this can change with further assessment)
 - Number of days off work required OR your employee’s ability to perform other selected work and the nature of any restrictions to be considered when implementing a recovery at work plan.
- Your employee should make sure they get a copy of all claim forms/certificates, and then provide you with a copy of these.

What you can do

Prior to writing a medical certificate, the more information the treatment provider has about the demands of your employee’s job, the better they’re able to determine your employee’s capacity to perform usual and any suitable duties you may have.

When writing a medical certificate, a treatment provider needs to know the type of work your employee does and the tasks involved.

How medical certificates can help your employee recover at work

A medical certificate gives you information about your employee’s injury and work capacity, including any restrictions they may have. You’ll need to match this up with duties you’re asking your employee to do within the recovery at work plan.

If you’re not sure that the available duties are appropriate based on the medical certificate restrictions, or you’re just not sure and need support, please call us on 0800 101 996 for help.

Helping your injured employee recover at work

Identifying suitable duties

Suitable duties are modified, or alternative tasks that your employee can do, which are in line with their capacity and capability. Identifying and offering suitable duties is an important and effective way to help your employee to be actively engaged in their recovery, while maintaining their work habits and routines.

How?

- Ask your employee and their manager/supervisor for ideas about what they can do.
- Consider all jobs/tasks within the business.
- Are there upskilling/training opportunities i.e. supervising duties.

Adapt work demands and the work environment

- Look at usual work tasks – which parts can still be done safely and comfortably?
- Look for other tasks within the business the employee can do.
- Allowing them to work fewer hours or alternative days.
- Buddy other staff to work alongside the injured person, to get all task components completed.
- Think about the work environment - do they need help getting to work, around the workplace? Can they work from home? Or at another worksite?

Before your employee gets back to work

- Ensure the proposed tasks match your employee's capabilities (refer to medical certificate). You can contact their treatment provider if you have any questions or would like to discuss their proposed duties.
- Make sure there's a clear plan for your employee, with regular reviews.
- Call us on 0800 101 996 if you need help. We'll provide advice or refer for a professional vocational service, if needed.

Contact us – we're here to help

For questions about a specific claim, call us on 0800 101 966, 7am - 7pm weekdays.

Or email us at claims@acc.co.nz

For more information for businesses, please visit www.acc.co.nz/for-business



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