

FULL SERVICE

An Employer's Guide and Toolkit for Workplace
Injury Management in BC Food and Beverage Operations

COMMUNICATION WIN-WIN
LOWER PREMIUMS
PRESERVE INCOME
PREPARATION REDUCE TURNOVER
SAFETY CULTURE RECOVER FASTER



ABOUT THIS GUIDE AND TOOLKIT

This guide and toolkit is intended for the food and beverage (F&B) sector in British Columbia. It describes the steps that employers can take to help employees return to work quickly, safely, and productively following a workplace injury or illness.

This guide explains some of the key principles and processes that you can use to develop and implement a return-to-work (RTW) program for your F&B operation. At the back of this guide you will find a toolkit with links to forms, checklists, and other resources that will help you build your RTW program efficiently and effectively.

RESOURCES

Throughout this document you will find links (highlighted in green) to sector-specific resources, such as checklists, safety talks, and orientation guides.

These resources are also listed at the end of this guide.

WHAT IS A RETURN-TO-WORK PROGRAM?

Return-to-work (RTW) programs are based on the idea that many injured or ill employees can work safely and productively during their recovery process. An RTW program is a systematic process of offering suitable modified or alternative duties that will help employees return to their full duties and normal daily activities as quickly as possible.

Return to work is sometimes also referred to as *graduated/gradual return to work*. Another term, *stay at work*, shares many features with return to work, except the aim is to keep your employee at work in some capacity following an incident rather than having them miss any shifts. Stay at work is preferable to return to work, although the use of stay at work obviously depends on the employee's condition. The term *injury management* may also be used when referring to RTW or stay-at-work programs.

DEFINITION

Modified work refers to modified or alternative duties that allow an employee to either stay at work or to return to work as quickly and safely as possible following an injury or illness. Modified work duties are any meaningful activities, in any department, that suit the employee's current abilities.



COSTS OF TIME-LOSS INJURIES

Claim costs for workplace injuries have been rising in the F&B sector, resulting in significant increases in WorkSafeBC premiums for all operations. During a five-year period, claim costs for the F&B sector increased by nearly 48%.

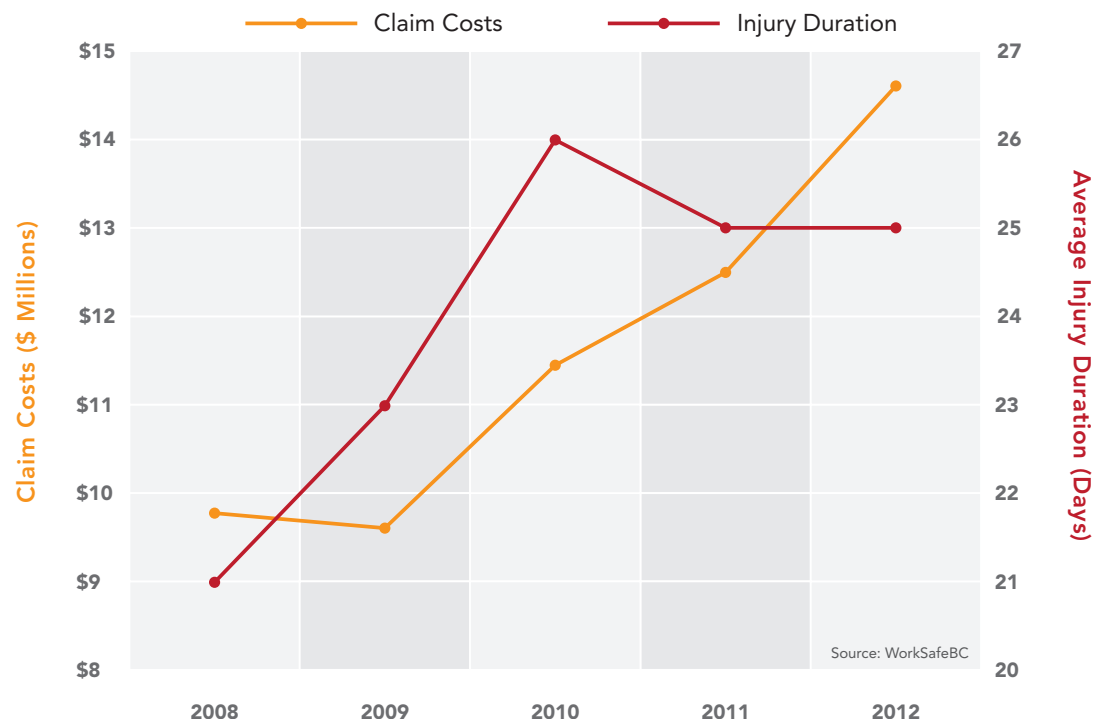
The duration of injuries in the F&B sector is a key driver of claim costs. Overall, injury rates have declined for the industry — but the duration of each claim has increased. The average number of short-term disability (STD) days paid for each STD claim increased from 21 to 25 over a five-year period.

Bringing an injured employee back to work promptly will minimize the WorkSafeBC claim, which will keep your operation's insurance rates low and minimize the down time that occurs when an employee is off work on a claim.



Year	Injury Rate*
2008	2.1
2009	1.7
2010	1.6
2011	1.7
2012	1.8

*Injury rate refers to the number of claims per 100 person-years of insured employment.



BENEFITS OF RETURN TO WORK

Return-to-work (RTW) programs are a win-win for employees and employers.

Benefits for Employees

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve healing and recovery timelines• Decrease the risk of negative long-term health effects	RTW programs have been proven to help employees recover faster from their injuries and have been shown to prevent the deterioration of an employee's overall skills, health, and attitude.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preserve income	RTW programs reduce financial hardship by allowing employees to continue working during the recovery process so they can keep earning their regular pay, which is greater than the WorkSafeBC benefits for employees who are off work completely.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce concerns about employment security	RTW programs reduce the psychological impact of a work-related injury or illness by giving the employee an opportunity to remain a productive member of your operation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain workplace relationships	Regular contact with co-workers, friends, and supervisors has proven to be a critical factor in the recovery process. For many in the F&B industry, co-workers are also friends. Maintaining contact with the social circle that the workplace represents is important for an injured employee's mental and emotional well-being.

Benefits for Employers

- Show your operation's commitment to a culture of health and safety
- Demonstrate that you value your employees
- Minimize the time an injured employee is absent from the workplace, which reduces WorkSafeBC insurance premiums
- Reduce the cost of hiring and training replacement employees
- Improve the overall guest experience

Offering modified work duties can significantly reduce the cost of your WorkSafeBC claims by lowering your wage loss payments. Lower WorkSafeBC claim costs ultimately result in lower WorkSafeBC annual assessments (insurance premiums) for your operation. You will also benefit from your employee's ongoing participation and involvement in the day-to-day activities of your operation.



TWO KEY PRINCIPLES FOR A SUCCESSFUL RTW PROGRAM

Your return-to-work (RTW) program will be successful if you remember two basic principles: Preparation and Communication.



Principle #1 — Preparation

Preparation is crucial for a successful RTW program.

Set Expectations — Inform Your Employees about Your RTW Program

Everyone should be made aware of your RTW program before an injury or illness occurs. Managers, supervisors, and employees all need to know the program exists and understand its benefits, as well as their respective roles in making it a success. Setting clear expectations will help supervisors and employees work together to plan an appropriate RTW process in the event of a workplace injury or illness.

One effective way of communicating your RTW program is through orientation or education sessions for new and returning workers. Develop an information sheet that outlines expectations, and present it as a reference guide via your employee orientation program. The information sheet should, at minimum, include the following information specific to your operation:

- Benefits of the program for employees and the company
- The RTW process, including what employees can expect and who to contact if they suffer a workplace injury or illness
- A diagram or work flow chart that specifies steps in the RTW process

For a sample orientation sheet that you can use as a starting point, see [Form K: Employee Orientation Checklist](#).

Be Prepared to Offer Modified Duties

When an employee is injured and your supervisors want to offer modified duties, how do they know which types of modified duties are available? Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you have a list of modified duties readily available?
- Is it easy to determine which duties are suitable for each type of injury or illness?
- Does your company have an information package that employees can provide to their doctors to help determine which duties they are able to perform during the recovery process?



TIP

To inform everyone about the RTW program, consider using staff meetings or announce the program via the company intranet, memos, newsletters, emails, or bulletin boards.

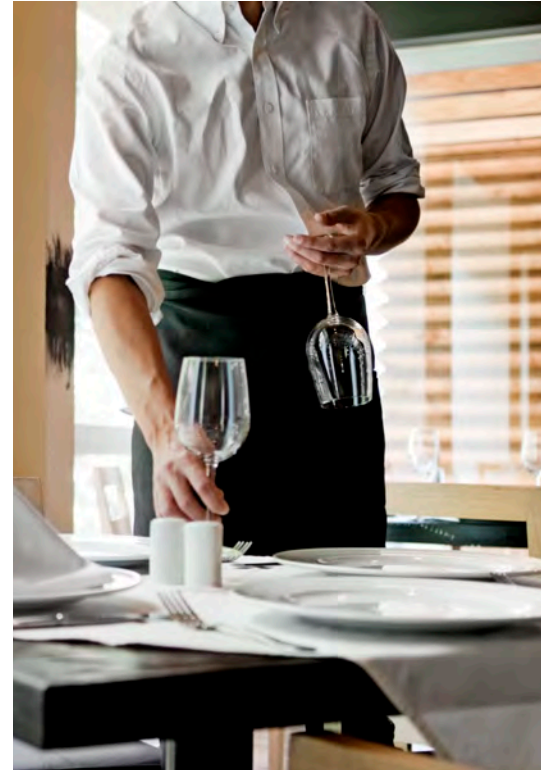
Put together a list of appropriate modified work opportunities before an injury occurs. Creating these resources in advance will make the RTW process easier for employees and supervisors. To create a list of modified duties, collaborate with your front-line staff on ideas regarding daily activities and how they may need help. Customize [Form J: Modified Work List](#) to suit the specific needs of your operation.

Create an RTW package ahead of time

Injuries occur suddenly and unexpectedly, but you can prepare for them by putting together an information package that will make the RTW process easier and more efficient. Stuff a large envelope with all the forms, checklists, and letters that will be needed when an employee is injured. Documents that the employer will need can go straight into the envelope. Documents for the injured employee and his or her doctor can be organized into separate smaller envelopes that are stuffed into the larger package. The idea is to have everything ready in one place so you don't have to go hunting for specific documents.

It's a good idea to prepare two different RTW packages. One package will be for injuries where there is no time loss and no medical aid needed. This will be a relatively small package because only a few documents are necessary for these types of injuries. The other package will be for injuries that result in time loss and require medical aid. This will be a more comprehensive package.

Include a checklist on the outside of the envelope to make it clear what needs to be done following an injury. You can use [Form F](#) and [Form G](#) as checklists for each of the two types of RTW packages. For a list of the forms, checklists, and letters that should be part of a RTW package, see the Toolkit section at the end of this guide.



PRINCIPLE #2 — Communication

Employee recovery through a process of modified work duties can be further enhanced if the employer (or, in many cases, the immediate supervisor or manager) and the employee communicate regularly regarding the employee's recovery plan and recovery progress.

Employers and employees also need to communicate with other key players, including the person who handles your company's RTW program, WorkSafeBC, and the employee's physician, physiotherapist, or other medical practitioners.

The Toolkit section at the end of this guide includes forms and letters that will help with the communication and documentation process.

Injury Management Process

The Recipe for Full Recovery



AN EMPLOYEE IS INJURED

STEP 1 Immediate Incident Response

STEP 2 Contact the Employee and Set Expectations

STEP 3 Follow Appropriate Path

A MINOR INJURY

B MODERATE INJURY

C SERIOUS INJURY

Employee unable to work/is off work - regular contact maintained

i Assess Abilities

ii Offer Modified Work

iii Visit the Doctor

iv Monitor and Review

v Adjust Modified Work as Recovery Progresses

FULL RECOVERY




HOW TO APPLY AN RTW PROGRAM

1. Immediate Incident Response


When an employee is injured or becomes ill, there should be a routine response process to ensure the safety of the employee and others. This process should involve the employee's supervisor and the first aid attendant responsible for providing first aid and securing the area to prevent further injuries from occurring.

Immediate incident response offers the first opportunity to assess the severity of an injury. The first aid attendant's assessment will help determine how to proceed with the return-to-work (RTW) program. First aid attendants are an important first link in the RTW process and should receive additional training on the company's RTW program and processes.

Start the RTW Process

As soon as possible following an injury, obtain the appropriate RTW package for the situation, open it, and begin the RTW process. Key forms that need to be completed are [Form E: Witness Statement](#) and [Form 52E40: Incident Investigation Report](#). These forms will provide useful information during the incident investigation process and should be completed immediately following a workplace injury or illness. If first aid is provided, document the details using [Form 55B23: First Aid Record](#). 

2. Contact the Employee and Set Expectations

The success of an RTW program depends on the supervisor-employee relationship and the extent to which these parties maintain ongoing lines of open communication. Following an injury, the supervisor or manager should meet with or contact the injured employee and set expectations as soon as possible, preferably on the day of the injury. This meeting will likely set the tone for the remainder of the recovery process. 

Make an offer of modified work on the first day — if possible, before the employee seeks medical aid. This is important because, in many cases, injured employees see a doctor and then go home, and your next opportunity to see the employee and offer modified work may end up being days or even a week later.

Reviewing general expectations and the RTW package is a good place to start. During the initial meeting, gather information for [Form 7: Employer's Report of Injury or Occupational Disease](#) and [Form 52E40: Incident Investigation Report](#). You can also start developing a plan with the employee using [Form I: Return-to-Work Plan](#).



TIP

Serious incidents must be reported immediately to WorkSafeBC. For more information on serious incidents, see page 14 of the WorkSafeBC publication *Small Business Primer*.



TIP

Depending on the severity of the injury, make use of your first aid services before sending an employee to medical aid. This will give you a chance to better administer your RTW program and will help improve its effectiveness. If first aid is appropriate and the situation allows, you can talk to your employee immediately about a modified work offer and give them forms to take to the physician so the RTW process won't be delayed.

3a. Minor Injuries

In some cases, an employee's injury is minor enough that he or she is able to resume regular duties the same day as the injury, following first aid treatment, with no medical aid or lost time. In this case, the incident does not need to be reported to WorkSafeBC. For minor injuries, use **Form F: No Time Loss and No Medical Aid Checklist**.

Even though the employee does not need to see a doctor, the supervisor or first aid attendant should follow up with the employee before the start of his or her next scheduled shift to ensure that the injury has not worsened. Make it clear to the employee that if he or she does see a doctor at any point, you need to be informed. Regular communication can prevent an injury that only requires first aid from becoming one that requires medical aid and lost time.

3b. Moderate Injuries

An injury is considered moderate if:

- It has worsened overnight
- Medical aid is required
- Lost time has occurred
- Modified work beyond the original day of injury is required

For moderate injuries, use **Form G: Time Loss and Medical Aid Checklist**. Also, use **Form I: Return-to-Work Plan** to start working with the employee on an appropriate injury recovery plan, which includes suitable modified work duties.


Provide the employee with the following forms:

- **Form A: Early and Safe Return-to-Work Letter** OR **Form A (alt): Employee Return-to-Work Checklist** — The employer fills this out and gives it to the employee at the start of the RTW process.
- **Form 6: Application for Compensation and Report of Injury or Occupational Disease** — The employee is responsible for completing and submitting this to WorkSafeBC.
- **Form 63M4: WorkSafeBC Authorization of Representative** — The employee may want to have someone act as their representative for workers' compensation matters, although they are not required to do so.

I. Assess Abilities

Use the first aid attendant's injury report (**Form 55B23**) as a guide, and refer to your operation's list of modified duties (**Form J**). This list makes it easier to identify suitable modified duties, depending on the type of injury or illness. 

DEFINITIONS



A *time-loss injury* is an incident that results in the employee missing work beyond the day the injury occurred. An injury is considered *no time loss* if the employee is able to return to work on the next day or shift following an injury.



First aid attendants and supervisors should follow up with employees to monitor recovery progress.



Offer modified work before an injured employee sees a physician.




Modified work can be performed anywhere within your operation. If you cannot accommodate the employee in your department, then work with other department managers. Consider the employee's abilities rather than focusing on limitations.

II. Offer Modified Work

Work together with your injured employee — review the list of possible modified duties that are appropriate, based on the employee's injury, and complete [Form D: Modified Work Offer](#) for the employee. Make offers of modified work verbally, whenever possible, and follow up in writing. Make sure your offers of modified work are specific — include restrictions with activities so doctors have a clear idea what the job tasks will require.


III. Visiting the Doctor

If possible, you will have reviewed the RTW package with your employee before he or she seeks medical treatment. If the supervisor and employee have already met and agreed on a Modified Work Offer ([Form D](#)), then complete [Form B2: Letter to Physician — Modified Work](#) with the employee and have the employee bring it to his or her doctor. This letter outlines that a modified work offer has been made to the employee. 

If the employee is going to the doctor before a modified work offer is agreed upon, fill out [Form B1: Letter to Physician](#), which the employee will give to the doctor.


The employee is expected to return either [Form B2](#) or [Form C: Physician Assessment — Return-to-Work Planning](#). This enables the supervisor to work with the employee to identify and schedule suitable modified duties, using the company's list of modified duties and the information provided by the physician. Once appropriate modified work has been identified, the supervisor can complete [Form D: Modified Work Offer](#).

IV. Monitor and Review

Frequent follow-up with injured employees regarding the status of their recovery is critical to successful outcomes. Follow up daily during the first week an employee is on modified duties and determine whether any changes need to be made, depending on the employee's ability to perform the modified duties. When the employee returns to work, fill out [Form 9: Employer's Statement of Return to Work](#) and submit it to WorkSafeBC. 

Even after an employee has returned to full duties, a daily follow-up in the first few weeks can help prevent an injury from recurring. Listen to the employee's experience and progress — pay close attention to any further signs and symptoms that are being reported.

V. Adjust Modified Work as Recovery Progresses

The best model for adjusting modified work as recovery progresses is through a collaborative approach with the employee. Substantial changes to the modified duties may require you to complete another Modified Work Offer ([Form D](#)) or Return-to-Work Plan ([Form I](#)). Smaller adjustments can be noted in [Form H: Manager/Supervisor Communication Log](#). 



Doctors may charge for filling out forms that you send with the employee. As a best practice, advise your employee that this might happen and that he/she will be reimbursed for the cost. Different doctors charge different amounts. As an employer, it's a good idea to decide on a maximum amount that you are willing to cover. Having decided that, you may want to encourage your employees to go to physicians or clinics that charge an amount within your budget.



It's a good idea to develop relationships with local doctors, if you're in a smaller community where this is possible. Such relationships will allow you to educate doctors about your operation's specific RTW process and needs.



Be flexible with the employee's treatment plan. Medical appointments and treatment are an important part of recovery. Allow time for treatment and other medical appointments during the work day.

3c. Serious Injuries

Serious injuries, such as those requiring hospitalization, may require a different route to recovery. In these situations, the key principle of communication with your employee, even while he or she is hospitalized, is all the more important to a successful recovery. Check in with your employee frequently during hospitalization to build trust and develop a caring relationship that will help in collaboratively determining suitable modified duties once the employee is well enough to return to work in some capacity. Your communication log is a critical tool in this process. As your employee recovers, monitor and document his or her progress.

4. Success — Full Recovery

The RTW process concludes when injured employees are able to resume pre-injury jobs fully, without undue risk to themselves or others. Once an employee has returned to regular duties and has had one or two weeks of follow-up contact with a supervisor, full recovery has been achieved. Confirming a return to full pre-injury duties is an important aspect of the RTW process and the management of your company. 📞



TOOLKIT & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Include these customizable forms, checklists, and letters in your RTW package.
Note: WorkSafeBC forms are not customizable because they are official forms.

For Employers and Supervisors

Form E: Witness Statement
Form F: No Time Loss and No Medical Aid Checklist (Non-Reportable Incidents)
Form G: Time Loss and Medical Aid Checklist (Reportable Incidents)
Form H: Manager/Supervisor Communication Log
Form I: Return-to-Work Plan
Form J: Modified Work List
Form K: Employee Orientation Checklist
WorkSafeBC Form 55B23 — First Aid Record
WorkSafeBC Form 7 — Employer's Report of Injury or Occupational Disease
WorkSafeBC Form 7 Reference Guide
WorkSafeBC Form 9 — Employer's Statement of Return to Work
WorkSafeBC Form 52E40 — Incident Investigation Report

For Employees

Fill out the following documents and give them to the injured employee:

Form A — Early and Safe Return-to-Work Letter
Form A (alt) — Employee Return-to-Work Checklist
Form D — Modified Work Offer
WorkSafeBC Form 6 — Application for Compensation and Report of Injury or Occupational Disease
WorkSafeBC Form 6 Reference Guide
WorkSafeBC Form 63M4 — WorkSafeBC Authorization of Representative

For Healthcare Providers

Give the following documents to your injured employee to give to the doctor:

Form B1 — Letter to Physician
Form B2 — Letter to Physician — Modified Work
Form C — Physician Assessment — Return-to-Work Planning

Other Resources

While developing and implementing your return to work program, you can find other tools and resources from the following organizations:

- go2HR
- WorkSafeBC
- Employers' Advisers Office

Acknowledgments

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go2HR Provides the Resources you Need to Succeed

go2HR, the BC tourism and hospitality industry's human resource association, is a non-profit society responsible for coordinating the BC Tourism Labour Market Strategy. This includes developing strategies to assist BC tourism and hospitality businesses in recruiting, retaining and training employees, thus supporting the growth and success of the tourism industry.

Working in partnership with WorkSafeBC, go2HR is also the workplace health and safety resource center and the certifying partner for the Certificate of Recognition (COR) Program for BC's tourism and hospitality industry.



Rather than filling out a paper version of Form 6 or Form 7, employees and employers can report incidents and injuries by calling WorkSafeBC Teleclaim toll-free at 1 888 967-5377. For online incident and injury reporting, go to [WorkSafeBC.com](https://www.worksafebc.com). In the centre of the page, under Claims, click the appropriate employer or worker link.



Form A is a brief letter, while Form A (alt) is a more comprehensive checklist — they are both acceptable. Use whichever version of Form A you prefer.



Employers' Advisers offers educational seminars in claims management for return-to-work cases.