

# Work Rehabilitation Policy

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## PURPOSE

1. This policy outlines the principles and responsibilities for work rehabilitation in the ACT Public Sector (ACTPS).

## APPLICATION

2. This policy contains a set of whole-of-government instructions issued by the Head of Service under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* which binds all employees and officers engaged under that Act.

## BACKGROUND

3. There is strong evidence supporting the health benefits of good work, and the importance of early return to safe work for injured employees. The ACT Government is a signatory to the [Australasian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine](#) of The Royal Australasian College of Physicians Consensus Statement on the Health Benefits of Good Work.
4. Work rehabilitation is intrinsically linked with workplace safety, workplace health and wellbeing, and the ACT Government Respect, Equity and Diversity Framework and this policy must be read in conjunction with these related policies and procedures.
5. For this policy, 'injury' refers to both compensable and non-compensable injury and illness.
6. 'Early intervention' is a rapid and appropriate response once there is knowledge of any problem or circumstance that may impact an employee's physical or psychological wellbeing in the workplace, irrespective of whether a claim has, or will be, made. Early intervention aims to limit the impact of injury and prevent recurrence.
7. 'Suitable employment' is employment within the ACTPS that the injured employee has the functional capacity to safely undertake, consistent with accepted medical restrictions, and the injured employee is suited to, or will be able to fulfil within three to six months, having regard to their skills and experience and their suitability for rehabilitation and vocational retraining. Providing suitable employment may involve modifying duties, providing alternative duties or a graduated return to work.

## PRINCIPLES

8. In the ACTPS, our people are our greatest asset. Focussing in the health, safety and wellbeing of our people strengthens our capacity to provide high quality and responsive services to the ACT community.
9. The ACTPS is committed to supporting those employees who become injured or ill and reducing the human and financial costs of injury.

10. The ACTPS is committed to the principles of the Safe Work Australia National Return to Work Strategy and uses the Strategy as a focus for the development and continuous improvement in work rehabilitation approaches and systems.
11. The ACTPS is committed to coordinated and effective work rehabilitation for employees to achieve safe, timely and durable work rehabilitation outcomes. This commitment is outlined in the [ACT Government Rehabilitation and Claims Management Systems – Commitment Statement](#).
12. Supportive workplace relationships (supportive conditions at work, supportive relationships with the injured employee and their supervisor and co-workers and open communication from all parties) underpin effective work rehabilitation.
13. Work rehabilitation in the ACTPS is a coordinated, accountable and results-oriented process that helps an injured employee stay at work or return to work in a timely way. It involves appropriate, adequate and timely interventions based on assessed needs and is focussed on work.
14. Early intervention is a critical element of work rehabilitation. The ACTPS is committed to providing appropriate early intervention for injured employees.
15. Work rehabilitation is a shared responsibility between the workplace and employee. The injured employee must be actively engaged in their work rehabilitation program.
16. The ACTPS will take all reasonable steps to provide injured employees with suitable employment to enable them to recover at work or return to work in a timely manner.
17. The ACTPS has a 'one service' approach to injury management and strives to ensure that there is an efficient use of injury management resources across the service.
18. The ACTPS is responsible for, and committed to, the delivery of high-quality essential services to the community. The provision of work rehabilitation support will consider operational requirements and ensure community services continue to be provided to the highest standards with the efficient use of public funds.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### A. DIRECTORS-GENERAL

- create and sustain a workplace culture that encourages safe work practices, reduces the risk of injury and supports injured employees;
- ensure that a framework is in place to identify and support employees who are injured, or are at risk of injury, including a system to implement early intervention and enable suitable employment; and
- provide leadership in the ongoing delivery of a 'one service' approach to the work rehabilitation of injured workers.

### B. EXECUTIVES, MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

- lead and model a culture that supports injured employees to recover at, or return to, work while managing an injury;
- ensure that a process is in place to identify and support employees who are injured, or are at risk of injury;
- provide adequate resources for, and monitor, work rehabilitation, including early intervention; and

- support, promote and actively participate in ACTPS work rehabilitation processes, including early intervention and the provision of suitable employment.

## **C. EMPLOYEES**

- work collaboratively with the workplace to support their recovery from injury by actively engaging in their work rehabilitation.

## **LEGISLATIVE REFERENCES**

This policy is to be delivered in accordance with:

- *Public Sector Management Act 1994* (ACT);
- *Public Sector Management Standards 2016* (ACT);
- *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (Cwlth);
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cwlth);
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (ACT);
- *Privacy Act 1988* (Cwlth);
- *Information Privacy Act 2014* (ACT); and
- *ACT Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997* (ACT).

This policy is aligned with the following ACTPS policies:

- [Work Health Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#);
- [Responding to Workplace Accidents/Incidents Policy](#);
- [Reasonable Adjustment Policy](#);
- [Building Positive Work Attendance Policy](#);
- [Respect Equity and Diversity Framework](#).