

## Rehabilitation, Recovery and Return to Work

**Summary** This policy and supporting template sets out the legislative and NSW Health requirements for the creation and implementation of Return to Work Programs.

**Document type** Policy Directive

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**Functional group** Personnel/Workforce - Occupational Health and Safety

**Applies to** Ministry of Health, Public Health Units, Local Health Districts, Board Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Chief Executive Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Specialty Network Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Affiliated Health Organisations, NSW Health Pathology, Public Health System Support Division, Cancer Institute, Government Medical Officers, Community Health Centres, NSW Ambulance Service, Dental Schools and Clinics, Public Hospitals

**Distributed to** Ministry of Health, Public Health System, Government Medical Officers, NSW Ambulance Service, Health Associations Unions

**Audience** All Staff of NSW Health

## Rehabilitation, Recovery and Return to Work

### POLICY STATEMENT

NSW Health is committed to a proactive and positive approach to ensure all workers are physically and psychologically safe in our workplaces and are supported to maximise their health and wellbeing.

NSW Health recognises that whilst striving to provide and maintain a safe and healthy work environment, workplace injuries and illness may happen. In the event of these occurring, NSW Health is committed to the safe and durable recovery at work, and where this is not possible, the early return to work of our injured workers.

### SUMMARY OF POLICY REQUIREMENTS

NSW Public Health Organisations (PHO) must ensure that a rehabilitation, recovery and return to work program is supported and resourced.

They must adopt a Return to Work Program that meets legislative and NSW Health requirements. Each PHO must implement the following [procedures](#) as the minimum requirement and to inform the design of an individualised Return to Work Program.

The individualised Return to Work Plan should reflect the [associated template](#) as much as possible and practicable, taking in to account the legislation governing the specific PHO. Any significant departures from the template are required to be authorised by the NSW Ministry of Health.

Each Program needs to be monitored and reviewed every two (2) years and must comply with the following:

- *Workers Compensation Act 1987* (NSW)
- *Workers Compensation Regulation 2016* (NSW)
- *Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998* (NSW)
- State Insurance Regulatory Authority Guidelines.

The Program must not be inconsistent with the Injury Management Program of their insurer or TMF Claims Manager.

Reviews will be undertaken by the relevant work health and safety or recover at work teams in consultation with workers and their chosen representatives.

Each PHO's Return to Work Program (or other documented procedure) must outline processes to safely manage staff returning to work from non-work-related injury and for redeployment of workers unable to return to their substantive role due to injury. These processes must be in line with any applicable whole of government or NSW Health policy.

The PHO must notify the workplace of the Program and display it in their workplace(s).  
“If you get injured at work” posters must be populated and displayed prominently in the workplace(s) of the PHO.

### REVISION HISTORY

Version	Approved By	Amendment Notes
PD2023_016 July-2023	Deputy Secretary, People Culture and Governance	Updated to improve compliance with legislation. Format changed to include template for Public Health Organisations to populate, creating their own individual Return to Work Program.
January-2022 (PD2022_002)	Deputy Secretary, Finance and Asset Management	Updated to comply with changes in legislation and to provide guidance for all NSW Health employees.
April-2013 (PD20013_006)	Deputy Director General	Updated to comply with new legislative requirements.
August-2011 (PD2011_054)	Deputy Director General	Updated the policy and procedures for Managers and Supervisors.
October-2003 (PD2005_325)	Director General	Introduced injury management into the workers compensation system. Replaces Circular 97/89 (originally issued as Circular 2003/75).
September-1997 (Circ 97/89)	Director General	Emphasis on rehabilitation and suitable duties.