

Trialling a return to work

An unpaid work trial is an alternative way to help your employee be at work while ACC continues to pay their weekly compensation. Work trials can be put in place once both the employee and ACC agree to the arrangements.

What is a work trial?

Unpaid work trials are useful if your employee's medical certificate says they can do selected work but you're unsure about the financial viability of having them back while they're recovering.

Perhaps you don't have a lot of other productive work to offer, your employee has limited capability, or you've hired replacement labour/redeployed other resources to cover your employee's usual position.

Your role in the work trial is to provide the injured employee with opportunities to be at work and to monitor their progress. You don't pay them during the work trial as they continue to receive ACC weekly compensation.

Benefits:

- Your employee takes part in work and carries out some agreed tasks in a safe environment.
- Having your employee in the workplace makes it easy to maintain connections and work routines.
- ACC continues to pay their full weekly compensation.

What a work trial involves

- A work trial is usually of short duration (usually up to two weeks, and no more than four weeks).
- You reintroduce your employee back into the workplace, with a focus on things like reconnecting with the team, catching up on what's been happening, and doing some small pieces of work.
- Your employee should have a Fit for Selected Work medical certificate before starting a work trial. The activities they undertake should be in line with their medical certificate and should be agreed with the employee.
- During the work trial, your employee should advise us that they've received no earnings each week via MyACC. This is so they continue to receive full weekly compensation. Your employee can request to use their sick or annual leave entitlements to 'top up' their pay to bring earnings from 80% up to 100% of their usual income, with no effect on their compensation from ACC.
- As your employee's work capabilities increase and they become more productive, it's expected you will start to pay your employee for the hours they work. This is when the work trial period ends.
- In most cases, it's best if a work trial is done alongside a Stay at Work programme, however in some cases it can be approved directly between ACC, the employer, and the employee. It's important that ACC approves a work trial to help make sure rehabilitation is well coordinated.



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How to initiate a work trial

1

Discuss and gain agreement from your employee.

2

Contact ACC's recovery team to agree if a work trial is the right fit for you and your employee as part of their recovery plan.

3

Agree a plan with your employee, including how you'll check in with each other to see how things are progressing.

Example

Wiremu is a delivery driver. He has a knee injury and a Fit for Selected Work medical certificate where his doctor outlined he should limit driving to 90 minutes at a time, avoid prolonged standing, and avoid walking under load/uneven ground. He's undergoing a strengthening programme with a physiotherapist and is keen to be at work.

Wiremu's employer has taken on a temporary driver to cover Wiremu's delivery run. Wiremu, his employer, and ACC agree that Wiremu will accompany the temporary driver on his deliveries to maintain customer continuity and help the driver with delivery protocols. In this way service is not disrupted and Wiremu gets to utilise his skills and experience without having to undertake the physical requirements of the job.

They agree he will do this as a work trial for three days per week for two weeks. Wiremu continues to attend his physiotherapy strengthening programme.

