



Adjusting duties, workload, or hours for an injured employee

Most people who are able to do some activities safely can recover at work if some short-term adjustments are made.

Identifying and offering suitable duties is an important way to help your employee work safely during their recovery, to maintain their work habits and routines. This may involve modifying their work environment, the tasks they do, or the hours they work.

To get the best outcomes for both your employee and your business, the tasks should be productive, achievable, and in line with the injured employee's medical certificate. If you need more information or clarification on the medical certificate, seek consent from your employee to contact their health provider.

Activities

- Talk to your employee – what do they think they're able to do right now and what activities should they avoid?
- Look at their usual work tasks – which parts can still be done safely and comfortably? Understand the physical and cognitive demands of their day-to-day job.
- Consider other tasks within the business – is there a task or project they could pick up?
- Are there any upskilling or training opportunities, eg supervising duties, they could undertake?

Supports

- Could you buddy other staff to work alongside the injured person, to get all task components completed?
- Do they need help with transport to/from work?
- If you need further advice, do you want to refer to a professional vocational service?

Work schedules

- Check their work schedule – could you allow them to work fewer hours or alternative days?
- Think about when your employee has the most energy or feels well – could you adapt their work schedule?
- Have you allowed time in their work schedule to accommodate any treatment programme or appointments they need to attend?

Physical environment

- Think about the work environment – do they need help getting to work or around the workplace? Can they work from home or at another worksite?
- If they're struggling with mobility, could you organise an alternative parking space or a ground floor area to work on?
- Can they sit/stand? Can you alter their workstation, noise, or light levels?
- Do they need any special equipment?

For long-term return to work plans, consider seeking legal advice to check if any variation to an Employment Agreement is needed during the recovery period.

