

Issuing the correct medical certificate for your patient's injury plays an important role in their recovery. There is strong evidence that work is generally good for physical and mental health and wellbeing, and can be a valuable component of a patient's rehabilitation. It can keep patients connected socially, maintain their income and overall confidence, and provide useful physical activity and a sense of purpose. A safe and timely return to work not only benefits the patient, but also their whānau and their workplace.

Choosing the right certification for your patient

Assessing your patient

The following factors should be considered when determining whether your patient can return to work:

Factor	Considerations
Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify what your patient can safely do with their injury — both cognitively and physically Set out your diagnosis, treatment, or rehabilitation recommendations and prognosis, if appropriate
Tolerance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set out any appropriate adjustments to your patient's work such as hours, travel, tasks, and environment Specify key dates for staged return to work
Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify what your patient must not do to keep them or others safe Outline what may constitute a risk to your patient, for example certain activities or situations Detail any specific actions that should be taken to reduce risk, such as changes to work hours, tasks, the environment, equipment or breaks

Types of medical certificates:

Certification type	Definition	Rehabilitation	Weekly compensation
Fully fit	This person can undertake their full pre-injury job duties and hours	Eligible to receive treatment and rehabilitation to support them with their recovery	Not required.
Fit for selected work	May not be able to return to pre-injury work but capable of engaging in active rehabilitation, or some modified or alternative duties	Eligible for treatment and can receive ACC funded vocational supports to assist their recovery at work	Eligible (even if no suitable work is currently available) and can earn up to 100% of their pre-injury earnings through a combination of employment and weekly compensation
Fully unfit	Unable to perform any of their work duties due to their injury	Eligible for treatment and can engage in passive rehabilitation to assist in their recovery	Eligible for 80% of their pre-injury earnings

Fully fit

The patient can undertake their full pre-injury job duties and hours. If you are unsure, ACC can organise a workplace assessment to determine if your patient can do their pre-injury job duties and hours.

Fit for selected work

When choosing the right certification, it is important to consider what the patient can do, not only what the employer allows. If your patient can participate in work in a modified capacity, consider a 'fit for selected work' certification. ACC have found that most employers are happy to discuss alternative duties or hours for their employee.

This can be:

- amended duties — changing duties to take account of the injury
- altered hours — changing the times or duration of work
- workplace adaptations — changing aspects of the workplace
- a phased return to work — a gradual increase in work duties or hours.

The benefit of a 'fit for selected work' medical certificate is that your patient can earn up to 100% of their usual income while they recover (ie as a combination of their employment earnings and weekly compensation).

ACC can help your patient recover at work with a workplace assessment and assist with implementing modified duties or hours safely eg Stay at Work Program.

If the patient has lost their pre-injury job or cannot maintain or return to their role due to injury, ACC can refer them for additional rehabilitation to help them become work ready.

Fully unfit

To be certified as 'fully unfit', your patient should fit into one or more of the following criteria:

- **Total inability:** admitted to hospital or confined to bed.
- **Health and safety risk:** being in the workplace, even with assistance or modifications, poses a specific health and safety hazard to this person, their co-workers, or the general public.
- **Contagion risk or quarantine:** there is a risk of contagion or a need for quarantine as a result of an ACC-covered injury, and this person is unable to work remotely.

It is important to review the patient regularly. When they are able to participate in active rehabilitation and vocational supports, they should transition to a 'fit for selected work' medical certificate.

Support ACC can provide

- vocational rehabilitation programmes
- specialised equipment and technology to support recovery at work
- assistance with transport to and from work
- occupational workstation assessments
- functional assessments
- specialised vocational medical services

For more information

Visit our website or call us on **0800 222 070**.

We're here to help.

