



He Kaupare. He Manaaki. He Whakaora.
Prevention. Care. Recovery.

Occupational Assessment Services

Operational Guidelines

May 2025



Table of Contents

Useful contacts and telephone numbers	4
Introduction	5
Overview of Vocational Rehabilitation.....	5
Overview of the Occupational Assessments.....	8
Initial Occupational Assessment (IOA)	8
Vocational Independence Occupational Assessment (VIOA)	8
‘Next Day Test’ Rule	8
Section 105 Occupational Assessment.....	9
Referrals for Occupational Assessments	9
Referrals	9
Initial Occupational Assessment (IOA) Referrals	10
Vocational Independence Occupational Assessment (VIOA) Referrals	10
S105 Occupational Assessment Referrals	11
Standard and Complex Referrals	11
Approving or Declining a Referral	12
Initial Occupational Assessment (IOA) Process	12
Interview with the Client.....	12
Report Requirements.....	15
Vocational Independence Assessment (VIOA) Process	16
Interview with the Client.....	16
Report Requirements.....	17
VIOA is a unique assessment	18
VIOA for Vocational Independence Deterioration	19
Section 105 Occupational Assessment Process	19
Interview with the Client.....	19
Report Requirements.....	20
Consideration of pre-incapacity earnings.....	21
Work Type Detail Sheets.....	22
When a work type detail sheet is not available	23
Quality of reports	23
Barriers to Return to Work	25
Literacy, Numeracy and Computer Literacy	25
Criminal convictions.....	25



Job Seeking Experience / Time out of the workforce	25
The Individual Rehabilitation Plan (IRP)	26
Culturally Competent Services	26
Meeting the Cultural Needs of Māori Clients.....	26
Clients who Require an Interpreter or cultural needs.....	27
Multiple Support People.....	27
Clients who have a Mental Injury as a Result of Sexual Abuse	27
Working with Clients who may pose a Health and Safety Risk	28
Communication regarding Clients with a Care Indicator	28
Reporting Health and Safety Risks and Incidents	29
Privacy and Storage of Client Health Information.....	29
Practical Meaning of the Code	29
Service Management	29
Engagement and Performance Manager Meetings.....	29
Non-attendance Fee	30
Travel.....	30
Supplier Quality and Performance Reporting.....	30
Working with ACC – Resolving Issues	31
Appendices	33
Appendix One – Relevant ACC Legislation	33
Appendix Two – Occupational Assessment Report Checklist.....	34
Occupational assessment checklist	34
Appendix Three – US Department of Labor Physical Demand Characteristics of Work	36



These operational guidelines should be read in conjunction with the:

- [Standard Terms and Conditions document](#); and
- [ACC's Kawa Whakaruruhau - cultural safety policy](#); and
- Occupational Assessment Services Service Schedule ('your contract').

The services you provide must comply with your contract. Where there are any inconsistencies between the operational guidelines and the Service Schedule, the Service Schedule will take precedence.

This is a living document and will be updated as needed - the latest version will be available on the ACC website at www.acc.co.nz.

ACC will consult with Suppliers if substantial changes to this document are proposed.



He Kaupare. He Manaaki. He Whakaora.
Prevention. Care. Recovery.

Useful contacts and telephone numbers

Your role in undertaking Occupational Assessment Services on ACC's behalf is likely to involve contact with several of our teams. Here are their contact details.

ACC Provider Contact Centre	Ph: 0800 222 070	Email: providerhelp@acc.co.nz
ACC Client Helpline	Ph: 0800 101 996	
Provider registration	Ph: 04 560 5211	Email: registrations@acc.co.nz
ACC Digital Operations eBusiness	Ph: 0800 222 994 [Option 1]	Email: ebusinessinfo@acc.co.nz
Health Procurement: Contract Administrator and Procurement Partner	If you have a question about your contract or need to update your details, please contact the ACC Health Procurement team: Email: health.procurement@acc.co.nz	
Engagement and Performance Managers	Engagement and Performance Managers can help you to provide the services outlined in your contract: Contact Provider Contact Centre or go to the ACC website - contact our provider relationship team for details of the Engagement and Performance Manager in your region	
ACC Website	For more information about ACC, please visit: www.acc.co.nz	
ACC Portfolio Team	For any questions on the Occupational Assessment Services for the Portfolio Manager and/or Portfolio Advisor, email vrs@acc.co.nz	



Introduction

Welcome to the Occupational Assessment Services Operational Guidelines. This document is intended as both a guideline for those working to deliver Occupational Assessments and as a framework document for ACC recovery team members.

These guidelines apply to all professions delivering services under this contract across all geographic regions.

These guidelines cover information about:

- Carrying out Initial Occupational Assessments (IOA), Section 105 Occupational Assessments and Vocational Independence Occupational Assessments (VIOA) for ACC Clients.
- The details ACC requires in the assessment reports.

Overview of Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational rehabilitation is a series of services designed to assist a Client to return to work following an injury. For more information see the Accident Compensation Act 2001, [Section 88-109](#).

When it is not possible for a Client to return to their previous employment, ACC will prepare the Client for employment that matches, as closely as possible, their experience and training before their injury or during their injury. To identify the types of work that may be appropriate for a Client, ACC will arrange an Initial Occupational Assessment (IOA) and Initial Medical Assessment (IMA).

These assessments allow ACC to offer rehabilitation focused on addressing the identified needs and barriers that are preventing the Client from being able to work. The agreed rehabilitation and treatment is included in the Client's Individual Rehabilitation Plan (IRP) otherwise known as the Recovery Plan (RP).

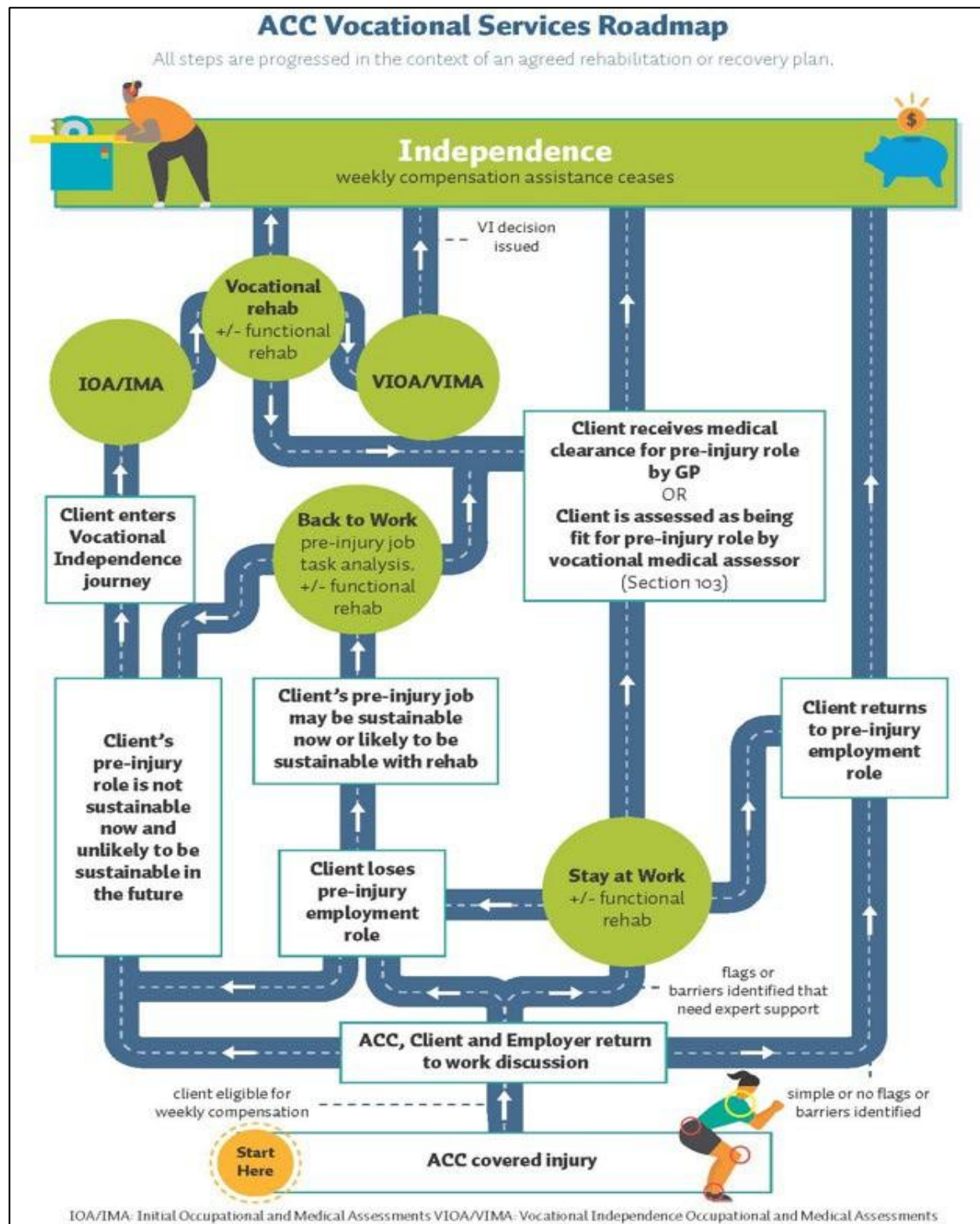
Once the rehabilitation specified in a Client's IRP has been completed, ACC will arrange a Vocational Independence Occupational Assessment (VIOA) and Vocational Independence Medical Assessment (VIMA). These assessments consider the outcome of the completed vocational rehabilitation and whether a Client can engage in work:



He Kaupare. He Manaaki. He Whakaora.
Prevention. Care. Recovery.

- for which the Client is suited, by reason of transferable skills (experience, education, and training or a combination of these things); and
- for 30 hours or more a week.

The diagram on the following page outlines the vocational rehabilitation pathway a Client may take following an injury and where the suppliers of the IOA and VIOA are involved.





Overview of the Occupational Assessments

There are three Occupational Assessments:

1. Initial Occupational Assessment (IOA);
2. Vocational Independence Occupational Assessment (VIOA) and;
3. Section 105 Occupational Assessment.

Initial Occupational Assessment (IOA)

If it becomes clear that, due to their covered injury, a Client may not be able to regain fitness for their pre-injury employment, ACC will arrange an IOA. The purpose of the IOA is to identify suitable work types for a Client based on their education, training, experience or a combination of those things and to produce a report that ACC can use to determine the Client's vocational rehabilitation needs and assists with the development of an Individual Rehabilitation Plan (IRP).

Vocational Independence Occupational Assessment (VIOA)

Once a Client has completed their vocational rehabilitation outlined in their Individual Rehabilitation Plan (IRP), ACC will arrange a VIOA.

The purpose of the VIOA is to:

- Consider the IRP co-produced with the client including the work types listed on the IRP.
- Review the vocational rehabilitation undertaken and consider whether this has been completed as per the plan.
- Consider the types of work which are suitable for the client.

'Next Day Test' Rule

When determining what roles are suitable during the VIOA, the Occupational Assessor must follow the 'next working day' rule. This rule requires that for each work type considered suitable, the client could gain employment and work in that type of work the next workday (if employment was available).

For a client to be able to gain employment and work the next working day, it is essential that the client not only has the skills but also has completed the necessary training and education required to enter that type of work. This training and education should have been completed during the client's rehabilitation.



Section 105 Occupational Assessment

The S105 Occupational Assessment is part of the process ACC undertakes when considering whether someone is eligible to receive compensation when, at the time of their incapacity, had ceased to be in employment, were a potential earner, or had purchased weekly compensation under section 223.

To be eligible to receive weekly compensation in these scenarios, the client needs to be considered unable, because of their injury, to engage in full-time work for which they are suited given their experience, education or training.

Example: *A young person suffered an injury while they were at school. They later request ACC investigate whether they are entitled to receive compensation for loss of potential earnings as they were a potential earner at the time they suffered their injury. As part of this investigation ACC requests you to undertake a Section 105 Occupational Assessment.*

ACC uses the S105 Occupational Assessment to identify jobs suited to the client by way of experience, education or training, or a combination of these things. As some investigations for entitlement to compensation are retrospective, the Occupational Assessor must also identify the period during which the client was vocationally suited to each job identified when required to do so.

When considering job suitability over a period of time, the Occupational Assessor should consider the skills, training, education and licences that the client had gained or lost during the timeline period. The jobs identified should also be or have been available in the labour market during the timeline period.

Referrals for Occupational Assessments

Referrals

When referring for an occupational assessment, the Recovery Team Member will ensure the Client is aware of the referral, its purpose, and their obligation of attending the appointment.

Each referral will contain specific information for the Occupational Assessor to read prior to the assessment to familiarise themselves with the Client as much as possible.



Initial Occupational Assessment (IOA) Referrals

An IOA referral is sent using the ACC6278 referral form.

This referral form will include:

- The relevant Client contact details and a summary of the Client's vocational rehabilitation, including the reason for the IOA.
- Any factors or information that may impact on the assessment, e.g. if the Client has communication difficulties, has been identified as a potential risk to the Occupational Assessor, or needs cultural services, such as an interpreter.
- Details of the Client's recent employment history, including pre-injury occupation.
- Details of any other planned or agreed rehabilitation interventions.
- Details of the Client's earnings before their incapacity.
- Any relevant demographic information for cultural safety purposes

The referral will include the following supporting documents:

- Where available, any relevant previous vocational rehabilitation reports requested by ACC as part of the rehabilitation process, a copy of the Client's IRP.

Vocational Independence Occupational Assessment (VIOA) Referrals

A VIOA referral is sent using the ACC6278 referral form.

This referral form will include:

- The relevant Client contact details and a summary of the vocational rehabilitation completed to date.
- Any factors or information that may impact on the assessment, e.g. if the Client has communication difficulties, has been identified as a potential risk to the Occupational Assessor, or needs cultural services, such as an interpreter.
- Details of the Client's earnings before their incapacity.
- Any relevant demographic information for cultural safety purposes

The referral will include the following supporting documents:

- An IOA which includes a list of suitable work types.



- A copy of the Client's IRP(s), this will list the work type options for the Occupational Assessor to comment on which have been confirmed as medically sustainable by the IMA.
- Notes and reports relevant to vocational rehabilitation milestones being completed as per the IRP, i.e. any documents or other evidence that show progress of the planned vocational rehabilitation.
- ACC691 Vocational Independence assessment readiness check. This contains any comments made by the Client that they considered relevant to the vocational independence Assessors (if available).
- A copy of the Client's CV (if available).
- Signed ACC6300 Authority to collect medical and other records form.

S105 Occupational Assessment Referrals

A S105 Occupational Assessment referral is sent using the ACC6278 referral form.

This form will include:

- The relevant Client contact details.
- A summary of the Client's injury and any vocational rehabilitation being provided.
- Any factors or information that may impact on the assessment, e.g. if the client has communication difficulties, has been identified as a potential risk to the Occupational Assessor, or needs cultural services, e.g. an interpreter.
- The period (from one date to another date) that the Occupational Assessor must consider for each of the work types.
- Any relevant demographic information for cultural safety purposes

The referral will include the following supporting documents:

- Where available, any relevant previous vocational rehabilitation reports or any previous occupational assessments, a copy of the Client's IRP, a copy of the Client's CV.

Standard and Complex Referrals

In most cases, the Recovery Team Member will specify in the referral whether the Occupational Assessment is considered standard or complex. The referral should be considered standard unless the Client meets one of the following criteria:



- The Client has a dual diagnosis and/or a significant co-morbidity, including an active mental health condition, that impacts on the time required to complete and report on the assessment, or;
- The Client has a covered Serious Injury, or;
- The Client has a covered Sensitive Claim, or;
- The Client has a covered moderate to severe Traumatic Brain Injury, or;
- The Client has other social issues that will impact on the time required to complete the assessment and report e.g. alcohol and/or drug abuse issues, English as a second language.

If the Occupational Assessor identifies during a standard IOA or VIOA, that any of the complex assessment criteria are met, they can recommend a complex assessment to ACC. ACC will consider approval of this request and advise the assessor of the outcome.

Approving or Declining a Referral

The Supplier may return any referral that contains inadequate information to ACC and request further details before accepting the referral. If upon receipt of a referral, or after obtaining further details, the Supplier determines that for any reason they are unwilling or unable to accept the referral, the Supplier must contact ACC within two business days to decline the referral.

Suppliers are required to notify the Recovery Team Member if they are unable to contact the Client within three business days of accepting the referral. If the Supplier is unable to commence the assessment within five business days of contacting the Client, the Supplier should contact the Recovery Team Member to either: negotiate an alternative timeframe or allow the Recovery Team Member to retract the referral.

Initial Occupational Assessment (IOA) Process

Interview with the Client

The Occupational Assessor should contact the client and organise an interview with the Client within three business days of the referral date. The interview should occur within five business days of contacting the Client. It is preferable this interview takes place face to face. This interview will form the basis of the report and recommendations.



The interview may take place over more than one session so that the Occupational Assessor has time to consider the suitability of the work type options for the Client, and so that the Client has time to consider the recommended work types. Follow-up interviews may be conducted over the phone if it is not practical for the Client to meet in person. The recommendations the Occupational Assessor will include in the final report should be discussed throughout these interviews.

The interview process must include, but need not be limited to:

- Whakawhanaungatanga with the Client and whānau, if appropriate. This enables the Client and Occupational Assessor to build a relationship prior to commencing the assessment.
- Explaining to the Client the purpose of the assessment and how the assessment will take place and ensuring the Client understands.
- Identifying all the Client's work experience prior to injury, at the time of the injury and since the injury.
- Identifying the Client's transferable skills, including any previous or current experience, education, and training.
- Identifying positive Client attributes and competencies that will help their employment options.
- Identifying all the types of work available in New Zealand (NZ) which may be suitable for the Client's based on their experience, education, training, or any combinations of these things.
- The assessor must also take into consideration the Clients pre-incapacity earnings.
- The Occupational Assessor should aim to identify 8-12 **different** work types.

In identifying work types, the Occupational Assessor will:

- Consider the Client's suitability for each type of work.
- Take into consideration the cultural attributes of the Client.
- Demonstrate they have considered a wide variety of work types, including work types of different physical demands i.e. sedentary, light, medium, heavy and cognitive demands
- Be realistic about work options, this could include understanding the Clients interests and motivation to help with the consideration.
- These types of work must exist in the current labour market.



- Refer to a variety of publications to reflect the availability of work within NZ, e.g. job vacancies in online advertisements.
- Ensure that each suitable work type is identified by the 6-digit code in the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) or National Occupation List (NOL).
- Clearly comment on the occupation at the 6-digit code level as to whether it is suitable for the Client and how. For example, 'Training and Development Officer (223311)'.
- Provide information on how each identified work type is relevant to the Client's experience, education, training.
- Comment on how they have taken into account the Client's pre-incapacity earnings. The Occupational Assessor will use their professional expertise to source earnings information of other work types and will be expected to keep a record of the source(s) they have used to gather the information. For more information, see the consideration of pre-injury capacity earnings section below.
- Provide a completed work type detail sheet for each work type, including one that aligns with the Client's pre-injury occupation.
- Identify any essential vocational training, upskilling or licencing the Client needs to complete in order to meet the key entry requirements and/or become vocationally work ready for each work type.
- If there is vocational training the client does not require to obtain employment in an entry level role but would nonetheless benefit from completing it to assist their employability or career advancement, please clearly state this.

The Occupational Assessor must invite the Client to comment and raise any issues. The Client's comments must be considered and recorded, this will include:

- Any issues and/or concerns prior to recommendations being made to ACC. **Note:** a Client's disagreement with some or all the identified types of work is not a reason to exclude the work types from the recommendations. These concerns should be discussed with the Client and documented.
- Comments about the types of work that are regarded as suitable and available in NZ.
- The Client's work preferences and if appropriate, discuss any reasons why these are not considered to be realistic options.



- Any other Client reported issues or barriers. These may include job availability, effects of Client's injury or any medical conditions, work tasks, salary levels, transportation availability, and childcare. However, the scope of the assessments must not be limited by any of these factors.

The 'Conduct of Initial Occupational Assessment' is set out Section 91 of the Accident Compensation Act 2001.

Report Requirements

The Occupational Assessor should complete and submit the ACC652 Initial Occupational Assessment report within ten business days of completing the assessment.

The report must identify:

- The Client's current work experience, training (including any work-related training and incomplete formal qualifications), skills, and the dates or specific period they obtained their experience, training, skills and qualifications.
- How the Client's pre-incapacity earnings have been considered.
- 8-12 **different** suitable work type options (stating the 6-digit code) the Client could undertake. Work types identified must be available for 30 hours or more per week in the New Zealand (NZ) job market and be based on the Client's, previous work experience, education, training attainments, transferable skills or a combination of these things.
- A complete work type detail sheet should be provided for each work type. **Note:** if a qualification is **desirable** but not essential, and the Client is not qualified but does have the relevant work experience and ability to do a job, then the work can be regarded as suitable, with the rationale for this explained in the report.
- Identify any vocational training, upskilling or licencing the Client needs to complete in order to meet the key entry requirements and/or become vocationally work ready for each work type. If the client does not require it to obtain employment in an entry level role but would nonetheless benefit from completing it to assist their employability or career advancement, please clearly state this.
- Any other barriers to the client gaining employment or completing any of the identified vocational training, upskilling or licensing.
- Client comments.

It is ACC's responsibility to send a copy of the assessment report to the client.



Vocational Independence Assessment (VIOA) Process

Interview with the Client

The Occupational Assessor should contact the Client and organise an interview with the Client within three business days of the referral date. The interview should occur within five business days of contacting the Client. It is preferable this interview takes place face to face. This interview will form the basis of the report and recommendations.

During the interview process, the Occupational Assessor must:

- Whakawhanaungatanga with the Client and whānau, if appropriate. This enables the Client and Occupational Assessor to build a relationship prior to commencing the assessment.
- Explaining to the Client the purpose of the assessment and how the assessment will take place and ensuring the Client understands the purpose.
- Review the Client's IRP and consider whether the agreed vocational rehabilitation has been completed.
- Identify the Client's current or previous work experience, education, training (including any work-related training and incomplete formal qualifications), skills, and the dates or periods this was obtained.
- Consider whether the types of work identified in the Individual Rehabilitation Plan are still suitable for the Client because they match the skills that the Client has gained through education, training, or experience. The assessor should also consider any new work types that may now be suitable since the completion of vocational rehabilitation.
- When identifying work types, the assessor should identify work types which are suited to the Client based on their experience, education, training or any combination of these things, as described above. The assessor must take into account the Client's pre-incapacity earnings. The Client should also be able to engage in these work types without any vocational restrictions, therefore, applying the 'next day test'.
- The Occupational Assessor should aim to identify approximately 8-12 **different** work types. The work types identified on the Client's IRP should be prioritised.
- Ensure that each suitable work type is identified by the 6-digit code in the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) or National Occupation List (NOL).



- Discuss with the Client the work types that are identified as suitable.
- Consider any comments the Client makes to the Occupational Assessor about those types of work.
- Invite the Client to comment and raise any issues.

The Client's comments must be considered and recorded and may include:

- Comments about types of work that are regarded as suitable and available in NZ.
- Any issues and/or concerns prior to recommendations being made to ACC. **Note:** a Client's disagreement with some or all the identified types of work is not a reason to exclude the work types from the recommendations. These concerns should be discussed with the Client and documented.
- Any other issues. These may include job availability, effects of Client's injury or any medical conditions, work tasks, salary levels, transportation availability, and childcare. However, the scope of the assessments must not be limited by any of these factors.

The 'Conduct of occupational assessment' is set out in [Schedule 1, clause 25](#) Accident Compensation Act 2001.

Report Requirements

The Occupational Assessor should complete and submit the Vocational Independence Occupational Assessment reports within 10 business days from completing the assessment. The Occupational Assessor is required to complete the following reports:

- ACC195 Vocational Independence Occupational Assessment report
- Work Type Detail Sheets
- ACC197 Vocational Independence Recommendation Form

The ACC195 Vocational Independence Occupational Assessment report should include:

- The Client's current work experience, education or training (including any work-related training and incomplete formal qualifications), skills, and the dates or periods they obtained their experience, training, skills and qualifications.
- Comment as to how the client's pre-incapacity earnings have been taken into account. For more information, see the consideration of pre-injury capacity earnings section below.



- Identify the vocational rehabilitation carried out as identified in the IRP or any other way and the outcome of this rehabilitation.
- A list of the work types identified in the IRP that were noted as likely to be medically sustainable
- List any additional work types that are now deemed suitable for the Client. The Client should be able to engage in these work types without any vocational restrictions, therefore, applying the 'next day test'. Work types identified must be available for 30 hours or more per week.
- The match between the client's current skills, education, qualifications and pre-incapacity earnings and the requirements on the work type detail sheet.
- Any environmental modifications that the Occupational Assessor identifies as necessary to enable the client to function safely in that type of work.
- Any potential vocational barriers to getting a job in the work types identified.
- The work types identified in the IOA that were excluded or removed and the reasons for doing so.
- Client comments.

Work type detail sheets must be provided for each of the work types identified as being suitable for the client.

The ACC197 Vocational Independence Recommendation Form should also be completed. This form requires the Occupational Assessor to list the work types identified as suitable for the client in the ACC195 Vocational Independence Occupational Assessment (VIOA) report, and any considered still suitable from the ACC652 Initial Occupational Assessment (IOA) report.

The 'Report on occupational assessment' as set out in [Schedule 1, clause 26](#) of Accident Compensation Act 2001.

VIOA is a unique assessment

The VIOA is a unique assessment. Due to the nature of each Occupational Assessment the content of IOA and VIOA reports will be similar e.g. client's work history and training. However, please avoid copying verbatim, particularly when explaining the rationale for suitability of a particular work type.



VIOA for Vocational Independence Deterioration

On occasion, ACC may refer for a VIOA to be undertaken for a Client who has previously been found vocationally independent. This is part of a reassessment process to determine if a Client has lost, or remains, vocationally independent.

If, after previously being found vocationally independent, a Client's injury deteriorates and there are reasonable grounds for believing the client may have lost their vocationally independence, ACC will arrange reassessment and refer for a new VIOA.

It is important to recognise that there are some slight differences when undertaking a VIOA in such circumstances. These include:

- There will be no Individual Rehabilitation Plan (IRP) to consider.
- There will have been no vocational rehabilitation carried out, since the previous VIOA was undertaken, to consider.
- Instead of considering the work types listed in an Individual Rehabilitation Plan (IRP), you should consider the work types identified in the previous VIOA and whether these are still suited to the client.
- You should take into account any additional skills that the Client has gained through any education, training, or experience acquired since the previous VIOA and consider any additional types of work that might be suited to the Client.

Section 105 Occupational Assessment Process

Interview with the Client

The Occupational Assessor should organise an interview with the Client within three business days of the referral date. The interview should occur within five business days of contacting the Client. It is preferable this interview takes place face to face. This interview will form the basis of the report and recommendations.

The interview process should include:

- Whakawhanaungatanga with the Client and whānau, if appropriate. This enables the client and assessor to build a relationship prior to commencing the assessment.
- Explaining the purpose and process for the Assessment and ensure the Client understands the purpose of the Assessment.



- Identifying the Client's current work experience, training (including any work-related training and incomplete formal qualifications), skills, and the dates or periods they were obtained.
- Identifying suitable types of work (stating the 6-digit code) for the Client.

When identifying suitable work type the Occupational Assessor should:

- Consider the Client's experience, education and training.
- Consider the key entry requirements on the work type detail sheet.
- Ensure the work type is available for 30 hours or more per week.
- Consider the period of time (within the period ACC are requesting the assessment for) during which the Client was vocationally suited to each work type.
- Apply the 'the next working day' rule.
- The Occupational Assessor should invite the Client to comment and raise any issues.

The Client's comments must be recorded and will include:

- Comments about types of work that are regarded as suitable and available in NZ.
- Any issues and/or concerns prior to recommendations being made to ACC.
However, a Client's disagreement with some or all the identified types of work, is not a reason to exclude the work types from the recommendations. These concerns will be discussed with the client and documented.
- Any other Client reported issues. These may include job availability, effects of client's injury or any medical conditions, work tasks, salary levels, transportation availability, and childcare. However, the scope of the assessments must not be limited by any of these factors.

Report Requirements

The Occupational Assessor should complete the ACC7416 S105 Occupational Assessment Report within 10 business days from the assessment date.

This report should include:

- The Client's work experience, training (including any work-related training and incomplete formal qualifications), skills, and the dates they obtained their experience, training, skills and qualifications.



- The specific date or period in which the experience, training, skills and qualification identified are no longer relevant.
- A list of the work types identified as vocationally suitable for the client. The Occupational Assessor should aim to identify approximately 8-12 work types. The report must include the period during which each work type was vocationally suitable.
- A summary of the recommended work types for the specific time periods.
- Work Type Detail Sheets should be provided for each of the work types identified as being suitable for the client.
- Client comments.

Consideration of pre-incapacity earnings

When conducting an IOA or VIOA you must take into account, among other things, the Client's earnings before their incapacity.

When making a referral, ACC will specify the Client's earnings that have been used for the purposes of calculating their entitlement to weekly compensation. This will be reported as either total earnings over a specified period (of up to 52 weeks) or an accepted average weekly amount. These amounts may or may not represent the Client's typical annual earnings or earnings immediately prior to their incapacity, therefore, it is important you take into consideration any comments the Client makes about these earnings.

The Client's pre-incapacity earnings should not be the sole determining factor as to whether a particular work type is suited to the Client, however, you will need to comment on how it has been taken into account.

Relevant matters that could be considered and commented on might include:

- The typical earnings range for a particular work type
- A comparison of the potential earnings for a particular work type to the Client's pre-incapacity earnings rate
- Opportunities for the Client to increase their earnings over time within the salary range of a work type
- Whether the Client's pre-injury earnings rate was higher than typical for the type of work they were engaged in.
- For example, because the Client:



- worked excessive hours or overtime
- received large bonuses or commissions
- received high earnings from a profitable business
- took large profits as a company shareholder
- Whether the Client worked in a niche or highly specialised role (e.g. professional sportsperson)

If you are identifying a work type where the potential earnings for that role are below the Client's pre-incapacity earnings, you will need to comment further on why the role is still considered suitable. For example, the work type might otherwise be a good match based on the Client's work experience, transferable skills or training/qualification they have undertaken.

Work Type Detail Sheets

Work type detail sheets must be provided by Occupational Assessors for any suitable work type identified and include a 6 digit occupation classification. Work types should be listed in order of priority, with the work types most closely aligning with the Client's pre-injury role listed first.

There are some work type details sheets based off the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupation (ANZSCO) which can be accessed through [ACC's website](#).

The sheets available on ACC's website have been developed using a specific template to achieve national consistency regarding descriptions of work types. They provide information on work tasks, work environment, work function/activity, qualifications, and other relevant comments.

Note: *using a consistent format for work type detail sheets when describing work options helps the Medical Assessor establish whether the client can medically perform the work described.*

The ANZSCO sheets are categorised into the following major occupational groups and indexed numerically:

- Managers (Major Group 1)
- Professionals (Major Group 2)
- Technicians and Trades Workers (Major Group 3)
- Community and Personal Service Workers (Major Group 4)
- Clerical and Administrative Workers (Major Group 5)



- Sales Workers (Major Group 6)
- Machinery Operators and Drivers (Major Group 7)
- Labourers (Major Group 8)

From November 2024, New Zealand has introduced its own tailored list of occupational statistical classifications called the National Occupational List (NOL). The NOL is largely based on the existing ANZSCO list however, it enables New Zealand to easily add new and emerging occupations and better reflect New Zealand's labour market and economy.

For now, both the ANZSCO and NOL lists are available to use. However, it is intended a review of the sheets currently available on ACC's website will be undertaken to align with the newly created NOL.

When a work type detail sheet is not available

The Work Type Detail sheets available on ACC's website are not the only option for an Occupational Assessor to use when completing the report for the Client, and they do not have to be used if an Occupational Assessor considers that an alternative option is preferable.

ACC will periodically review and make updates to the available Work Type Detail Sheets. If there is a missing a Work Type Detail Sheet or a sheet needs to be updated, the Occupational Assessor may inform ACC via the request a new sheet option on the website. The assessor will need to provide their name, supplier name, contact email, confirmation they are an occupational assessor, suggested ANZSCO code, job tile and the reason for the request.

Please be aware, the assessor should not delay completing the assessment after requesting a new sheet. The Occupational Assessor may choose to update an available sheet to be suited to a Client's work type.

Quality of reports

Occupational assessment reports are important documents that assist in the development of the Client's rehabilitation plan and may be subject to analysis by a reviewer or the court to determine whether the work types identified are appropriate for the Client. Because of this, attention should be paid to the following points:

- The Occupational Assessor must consider that the Client has the education, training, experience, qualifications and/or transferrable skills required for each work type. Many



jobs which were previously unskilled labour now require qualifications for entry into a role.

- The Client must also have the skills to realistically perform a role even if the skills are not specifically stated. For example, literacy skills are particularly important to check for and if they are an issue and no alternative work is suitable, literacy skills can be addressed through recommending another vocational service.
- Ensure the Client has the appropriate transferable skills for the job. Transferable skills should be grouped according to the Client's employment history. Occupational Assessors should use current resources, e.g. Careers New Zealand job descriptions, to identify actual employment duties the Client has carried out.
- The Occupational Assessors should aim to identify 8-12 **different** work types. For example, if the Client has the skills to do so, identify work types across a variety of physical and cognitive demands.
- If there is doubt over whether the information obtained from the interview is factual, it should be verified, e.g. phone calls to organisations to confirm skills required, or a discussion of skills listed in work type sheets.
- The question of being physically or medically able to engage in work is a medical issue. The Occupational Assessor must only provide evidence on the Client's experience, education, or training which will help ACC decide on appropriate vocational rehabilitation.

The ACC Recovery Team Member will quality review the completed report using a check list which is included in appendix two, this is to ensure that the relevant information has been provided in the report and that the recommendations are consistent with all information provided in the body of the report and the referral information.

The Occupational Assessor will promptly review and make any necessary written amendments to the report within two business days of the request if a Recovery Team Member advises that:

- The recommendation is not consistent with the requirements set out in the service schedule, operational guidelines, or the Accident Compensation Act 2001 Act.
- Errors or omissions need to be amended.



Barriers to Return to Work

These are not intended to be an exhaustive list and should not exclude other barriers to employment identified by the Occupational Assessor or the Client.

Literacy, Numeracy and Computer Literacy

Although not stated as a specific requirement, most jobs require some level of literacy, numeracy and computer literacy. It is important that the Occupational Assessor identifies any literacy issues during the assessment and provides comment in the report.

A short literacy test may be conducted if the Occupational Assessors suspects a deficit in reading and writing skills.

If literacy issues are identified, work types identified as suitable for the Client must be sympathetic to these limitations.

The Occupational Assessor may also choose to recommend a more in-depth literacy test and request ACC provide literacy support to the Client during any recommended training or licencing.

Criminal convictions

This should be discussed with the Client as some occupations exclude potential employees with criminal convictions. For example, many large organisations conduct security screening as a standard procedure in their recruiting process. It is reasonable to ask the Client if they have any prior criminal convictions that would affect employment. **Please note:** The work option can still appear in the occupational assessment report with the comment that the Client does have prior criminal convictions that may jeopardise actual employment in the work type. If the Client refuses to answer the question, this should be noted as well.

Job Seeking Experience / Time out of the workforce

The Occupational Assessor should consider the Clients previous experience with job seeking and the time out of the work force. The Occupational Assessor may choose to recommend pre-employment modules be completed as part of their vocational rehabilitation. This could include educating the Client on interview skills, writing cover letters, etc.



The Individual Rehabilitation Plan (IRP)

The Individual Rehabilitation Plan (IRP), otherwise known as the Recovery Plan (RP), is an integral part of the Client's vocational rehabilitation and vocational independence process and is a requirement of the Accident Compensation Act 2001. It is used to document the agreed and completed rehabilitation that has been negotiated in partnership between the Client and ACC. It is a legally binding document.

A copy of the IRP should be provided to the Occupational Assessor when undertaking an Occupational Assessment.

The IOA will support the development of this plan as well as the overall rehabilitation outcome goal.

The IRP document is updated throughout a Client's rehabilitation. All rehabilitation on the IRP should be complete before the Client is assessed for vocational independence.

Culturally Competent Services

Occupational assessments are Client-centred and should be tailored to meet the cultural needs of Clients. The IOA is in most cases is the entry point for a Client beginning their vocational independence journey. Services delivered will recognise and respect individual cultural and spiritual values and beliefs to improve the Client health and wellbeing.

Occupational Assessors should check with Clients that information is communicated in a way they and their family understand.

Whakawhanaungatanga is an important way to commence the assessment, it provides the assessor and Client and opportunity to build a relationship. For example, rushing into the assessment or not allowing sufficient time for face-to-face interaction can negatively impact relationships and, therefore, the joint understanding of assessment and recommendations may be misinterpreted.

Meeting the Cultural Needs of Māori Clients

Occupational Assessors will ensure services are delivered to Māori clients in a way that recognises and respects Māori values and beliefs, and information is communicated in a way that they and their family/whānau understand.



For further information see: [Te Whānau Māori me ō mahi - guidance on Māori Cultural Competencies for Providers](#) which can be downloaded from the acc.co.nz website. Adhering to the requirements of these guidelines will assist Suppliers in meeting their responsibilities for cultural competence and deliver positive health outcomes for Māori clients.

Clients who Require an Interpreter or cultural needs

If there are any interpreting or other cultural needs identified, the Occupational Assessor should discuss these with the Recovery Team Member. If the Client needs an interpreter, a professional interpreter will be provided by ACC to ensure the occupational assessment is conducted in a way that is confidential, effective, and ensures the Client is fully aware of what's being asked of them.

The cost of the interpreter service is met by ACC and requires prior approval.

Multiple Support People

The Client has the right to bring a support person/s them for support, provided that the safety of all involved can be assured and the effectiveness of the assessment is preserved. Clients do not have to explain or justify why they want a support person, and it may involve more than one person.

However, if the Occupational Assessor is not comfortable with the situation and considers that they cannot undertake the assessment (e.g., a support person/s becomes disruptive and/or obstructs the assessment process) this should be discussed with the Client. If the Occupational Assessor cannot resolve the issues, they may need to terminate the assessment and contact the Client's Recovery Team Member.

Clients who have a Mental Injury as a Result of Sexual Abuse

During the referral or assessment process, an Occupational Assessor may identify that a Client has suffered a mental injury resulting from sexual abuse. In these instances, the Occupational Assessor should discuss a referral to an Integrated Services for Sensitive Claims (ISSC) Provider with the Client and their ACC Recovery Team Member (RTM).

Comprehensive best practice guidelines for providers of services to people who have experienced sexual abuse can be found on acc.co.nz by searching for *ACC4451 Sexual abuse and mental injury practice guidelines for Aotearoa NZ*. Providers delivering Occupational



Assessments to clients who have experienced sexual abuse are expected to incorporate the principles and best practice guidelines outlined in the document.

Working with Clients who may pose a Health and Safety Risk

ACC may not always have access to detailed information concerning a Client's history, but if a Client has been identified as posing a risk, the Recovery Team Member will advise the assessor and will be able to provide information relevant to the Occupational Assessor to help mitigate health and safety risks to service providers and others.

If, for some reason, such as a safety risk, the Occupational Assessor considers that the assessment may not be able to continue, they should discuss the situation with the Client and try and resolve the situation. Another reason for stopping the assessment is when a Client withdraws their consent to continue with the assessment.

If despite discussion, the Occupational Assessor is unable to reach a resolution and feel that the assessment should not or cannot continue, they should explain this to the Client and terminate the assessment. In this situation, the Occupational Assessor will notify the Client's Recovery Team Member as soon as possible and fully document the reasons for the termination of the assessment in their report.

Communication regarding Clients with a Care Indicator

The Recovery Team Member of a Client with a Care Indicator will advise the Supplier in writing, either:

- Prior to the Suppliers initial contact with the Client, or
- If the Supplier is already providing services to the Client, as soon as possible when ACC receives new information about Client risk.

Supplier safety is a priority, and any assessment should be terminated if the Client, their advocate or support persons make the Occupational Assessor to feel threatened or unsafe in any way. If the Occupational Assessor's safety is at risk, please notify:

- The Client's Recovery Team Member as soon as possible and fully document the reasons for the termination of the assessment in the occupational report.
- The police, if warranted in the circumstance.



He Kaupare. He Manaaki. He Whakaora.
Prevention. Care. Recovery.

If the Occupational Assessor chooses to continue with assessment of a care indicated Client and wish to employ a security guard, then please contact the Recovery Team Member for this to be arranged.

Reporting Health and Safety Risks and Incidents

Health and safety risks and incidents (including notifiable events as defined by WorkSafe), threats, and other health and safety risks, must be reported to ACC using the procedure and [online form](#) on the ACC website.

Privacy and Storage of Client Health Information

Suppliers are bound by the Privacy Act 2020 and the Health Information Privacy Code 2020. These codes set specific rules for agencies in the health sector. It covers health information collected, used, held and disclosed by health agencies and takes the place of the information privacy principles for the health sector. It is important you comply with the code.

Practical Meaning of the Code

- The Supplier must check they've been sent the right information.
- Store information responsibly. For example, personal Client information shouldn't be left unattended in your car or unsecured at your personal residence.
- Use a secure email address for correspondence which includes personal Client information. Secure email is an email account with password and security features that only you and authorised people can access.
- Check every email address to ensure that the email is going to the intended recipient.

Further information and advice on ACC's requirements and your responsibilities when handling ACC Clients' information can be found on our website: [Protecting privacy as a supplier or provider \(acc.co.nz\)](#).

Service Management

Engagement and Performance Manager Meetings

Engagement and Performance Managers (EPMs) may meet with Suppliers as arranged between the parties to discuss any issues which have been escalated to the EPMs from ACC, Clients,



He Kaupare. He Manaaki. He Whakaora.
Prevention. Care. Recovery.

other health providers, or other stakeholders. Suppliers are encouraged to raise any issues in relation to meeting their performance requirements with the EPM.

Non-attendance Fee

Clients have responsibilities to participate and co-operate in their rehabilitation. Clients should notify their ACC Recovery Team Member or the Occupational Assessor if they are unable to attend their appointment, or where there are unexpected changes in their circumstances.

Where a Client appears unwilling to participate in the occupational assessment, the Occupational Assessor will determine the best way to manage this situation in the first instance. If there is ongoing non-attendance or lack of engagement the Occupational Assessor must discuss this with the Recovery Team Member.

ACC expects that Occupational Assessors to make all reasonable efforts to remind the Client of the appointment such as an appointment card, a reminder letter, a phone call, or a text message to the Client.

Occupational Assessors can invoice ACC for a client non-attendance fee if the client does not attend their appointment and fails to give 24 hours' notice (see the Occupational Assessments Services Schedule for details).

Travel

Travel is payable for this service, provided this is done so in accordance with the Occupational Assessments Service Schedule and ACC Travel Guidelines available on [ACC's website](#).

Supplier Quality and Performance Reporting

Suppliers are required to submit annual reports to the Portfolio team via vrs@acc.co.nz, in line with the Occupational Assessment Services Schedule within ten (10) business days from 30 April (for the period 1 May to 30 April).

This report should be submitted using the template provided directly via email to Suppliers.

The annual report must include:

Client demographics and experience:



- The number of referrals accepted and declined per month, including reasons for declines.
- Location of clients
- Percentage of the client seen via telehealth, with optional commentary
- Travel costs charged to ACC as a percentage of total service cost, with optional commentary

Quality Assurance:

- Evidence that each named provider has undertaken at least 5 Supplier initiated peer reviews of assessment reports. Note: a copy of the Occupational Assessment Services report checklist can be found in Appendix Two.
- Up to date information for staff and contractors actively undertaking work on this contract and their ongoing commitment to continued professional development related to Occupational Assessments.
- Timeliness of report, including commentary if timeframes have not been met.

General:

- Confirmation all Occupational Assessors have recently reviewed ACC's Travel Policy, Telehealth Guidelines and Kawa Whakaruruhau (Cultural Safety) Policy.

Working with ACC – Resolving Issues

Occupational Assessors should contact the ACC Recovery Team Member in the first instance if there are any matters requiring clarification. For any matters that needs further escalation, please refer to the "[Resolving issues together](#)" process map or the [Standard Terms and Conditions](#).

This is especially important for any issue with the potential to be high risk, involves risk to a Client, or risk to ACC's reputation.

If there has been a high risk or adverse event, such as a:

- Privacy breach.
- Personal or Client harm or safety issue.
- Contract breach.
- Media risk.



He Kaupare. He Manaaki. He Whakaora.
Prevention. Care. Recovery.

The Occupational Assessor or Supplier must tell ACC immediately by either:

- Contacting the Engagement and Performance Manager.
- Contacting the Provider Helpline on 0800 222 070.

It is important to make contact and not just leave a message.



He Kaupare. He Manaaki. He Whakaora.
Prevention. Care. Recovery.

Appendices

Appendix One – Relevant ACC Legislation

[Section 80 Purpose of vocational rehabilitation](#)

[Section 85 Corporation liable to provide vocational rehabilitation](#)

[Section 86 Matters to be considered in deciding whether to provide vocational rehabilitation](#)

[Section 87 Further matters to be considered in deciding whether to provide vocational rehabilitation](#)

[Section 88 Vocational rehabilitation may start or resume if circumstances change](#)

[Section 89 Assessment of claimant's vocational rehabilitation needs](#)

[Section 91 Conduct of initial occupational assessment](#)

[Section 105 Corporation to determine incapacity of certain claimants who, at time of incapacity, had ceased to be in employment, were potential earners, or had purchased weekly compensation under section 223](#)

[Section 106 Effect of determination under section 105 on entitlement to weekly compensation](#)

[Section 107 Corporation to determine vocational independence](#)

[Section 108 Assessment of claimant's vocational independence](#)

[Section 109 When claimant's vocational independence to be assessed](#)

[Schedule 1 Clause 24 Occupational assessor](#)

[Schedule 1 Clause 25 Conduct of occupational assessment](#)

[Schedule 1 Clause 26 Report on occupational assessment](#)

[Schedule 1 Clause 47 Corporation to pay weekly compensation for loss of potential earnings capacity](#)



Appendix Two – Occupational Assessment Report Checklist

Occupational assessment checklist

This checklist can be used by ACC, an occupational assessor or peer reviewer to ensure an occupational assessment report meets ACC quality standards.

For all occupational assessment reports, evaluate to ensure that:

Client name and ACC claim number are correctly recorded on the report ☐

Client's work experience, education (including any incomplete formal qualifications) and any work-related training have been identified ☐

The report comments on any transferable skills the client may have ☐

The report contains types of work that are of interest to the client and reasons why the work may or may not be considered realistic ☐

The report identifies suitable work types that reflect the client's experience, training and transferrable skills ☐

The report has given consideration to how the potential earnings in each work type compare to the client's pre-incapacity earnings ☐

Identified work types are appropriate and available eg considering the client's location or being within a reasonable commuting distance ☐

If the skills needed for a work type have changed since the client last worked in that field, eg considering technology changes and if client training and experience match the required skills ☐

The report shows consideration of the client's numeracy, literacy, language, and computer skills if relevant for any of the identified work types ☐

The identified work types reflect the current labour market ☐

If needed, the assessor has specified any environmental modifications that may be required to assist the client to function safely in the identified work types ☐

Any information provided by ACC and the client to the assessor is noted in the report ☐

The report indicates the work types were discussed with the client and records any comments or concerns from the client ☐



A comprehensive work type job detail sheet for each identified work type has been included ☐

In addition to the above, for initial occupational assessment reports only, evaluate to ensure that:

The report details any required vocational upskilling, training, licencing or other needs the client has in order to become work ready for each work type ☐

Barriers to employment identified ☐

In addition to the above, for vocational independence occupational assessment reports only, evaluate to ensure that:

The report provides a review of the initial occupational assessment, individual rehabilitation plan and the vocational rehabilitation provided by ACC ☐

The report contains details of any work trials that were undertaken and how successful they were ☐

Reasons have been provided for removing any work type identified in the individual rehabilitation plan ☐



Appendix Three – US Department of Labor Physical Demand Characteristics of Work

Overview

The 37.02 US Department of Labour Physical Demand Characteristics of Work chart lists the occupational requirements for physical exertion.

Parameters

- Amount of weight moved at work
- Relative frequency that activity occurs during workday (occasional, frequent or constant).

<i>Physical demand level</i>	<i>Occasional (0-33% of the workday)</i>	<i>Frequent (34-66% of the workday)</i>	<i>Constant (67-100% of the workday)</i>	<i>Typical energy required</i>
Sedentary	10lbs (4.5 kilos)	negligible	negligible	1.5-2.1 METS
Light	20lbs (9 kilos)	10lbs (4.5 kilos) and/or walk and/or stand with operation of controls	negligible and/or operate controls while seated	2.2-3.5 METS
Medium	20-50lbs (9-22.7 kilos)	10-25lbs (4.5-11.4 kilos)	10lbs (4.5 kilos)	3.6-6.3 METS
Heavy	50-100lbs (22.7-45.4 kilos)	25-50lbs (11.4-22.7 kilos)	10-20lbs (4.5-9 kilos)	6.4-7.5 METS
Very heavy	> 100lbs (45.4 kilos)	> 50lbs (> 22.7 kilos)	20lbs (> 9 kilos)	> 7.5 METS



He Kaupare. He Manaaki. He Whakaora.
Prevention. Care. Recovery.

Where

- Operation of controls includes pushing and/or pulling of arm and/or leg controls
- Operating controls while seated includes pushing medical and/or pulling of arm and/or leg controls.

Reference

Matheson LN. Chapter 18: Functional Capacity Evaluation, pp 168-188. In: Demeter SL, Andersson GBJ, Smith GM. *Disability Evaluation*. Mosby. American Medical Association. 1996.