



10-Step Guide to Developing an ecovery[®] Return to Wellness Program



1. **Form a Return to Wellness (RTW) Committee or Team** – Decide who will be involved (Director of HR, Safety Manager, Supervisors, Union Representatives) and the purpose and scope of the committee.
2. **Review of Current Systems** – Review your loss history for trends. For example, one area may struggle the most with RTW, or have the most disabling injuries. This may not only be an area to focus on safety, but also for return to wellness.
3. **Post-injury response plans** – Create a plan for when an injury happens that highlights who is responsible for what. For example, who employees report their injuries to, who completes the accident investigation, which person is responsible for transporting the injured worker to the medical provider or hospital, which person is responsible for monitoring the employee’s recovery/disability status, obtaining updated restrictions etc.
4. **Develop Modified Job Task Lists** – Develop lists of tasks that injured employees could perform, considering sedentary, light and medium duty tasks. Have supervisors make a “wish list” of tasks that they wish could be completed if they had the time.
5. **Develop a Policy Statement** – Create a policy statement that communicates what your RTW commitment is, what the company’s role in RTW is, as well as the intentions of the program. A good policy statement will serve as the philosophy and framework for future RTW decisions and communications.
6. **Communicate the Policy** – Place the policy in the employee handbook, make it part of annual training, and new hire orientation. It is essential that RTW is made part of the company culture at every level. Advertise it in areas throughout the building, make it a company initiative.
7. **Educate the Workforce** – Make sure that everyone knows about your return to work program. Provide updated training on the importance of RTW, your RTW program, the importance of RTW in physical rehab, and that it is a team effort.
8. **Re-evaluate and adjust the program** – use the checklist to audit your RTW program, spot trends, and discover additional root causes. If there are changes in the organization or production, re-evaluate the program as needed, but no longer than annually. An example of this is if new positions are created, positions are taken away, or if new locations open.
9. **Maintain Consistency** – Limit exceptions to your program so that you maintain consistency, practice fair treatment and avoid favoritism. Actions speak louder than words – the integrity of your program is directly linked to its execution.
10. **Coordinate with Medical Providers** – (May not apply in all states) Post your panels, notify your providers that you offer modified work, and send them a packet of modified job task lists to keep on file. When an injured worker reports an injury, have them sign a panel acknowledgment form and provide them with a Return to Work form for the doctor to complete.