



Australian Government

Comcare

REHABILITATION CASE MANAGER CORE CAPABILITIES

Comcare has developed a set of core capabilities for the roles of Rehabilitation Case Managers (RCM), Supervisors and Claims Managers. Defining a set of core capabilities for each of the three roles will assist to:

- > create a scheme standard to inform capability requirements
- > support recruitment of appropriately skilled and experienced people to RCM roles
- > maximise the opportunity for the best possible outcomes for injured employees
- > provide a framework to assess related training needs
- > provide guidance to individuals on the capabilities they need to attain and maintain in their respective roles.

RCM CORE CAPABILITIES

Role description: The term RCM refers to the delegated case manager who holds a current and written instrument of delegation from the relevant rehabilitation authority to perform the functions and exercise the powers of the rehabilitation authority in accordance with sections 36 and 37 of the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (SRC Act).

Operationally, the role encompasses; identifying and providing early intervention services where applicable, arranging rehabilitation assessments, determining rehabilitation programs including monitoring and engaging stakeholders in the Return To Work (RTW) process, dealing with matters of non-compliance and referring to the relevant authority for requests for reconsideration. RCMs typically also work with employees with non-compensable injuries. Strategically, RCMs may be responsible for developing, monitoring, reviewing policies or guidelines, programs, systems and resources which impact on workplace rehabilitation.

Role profile: The RCM is the focal point within the organisation for the achievement of a critically important human resource objective—the reduction of the impact of injury on the individual and the workplace.

The functions of a RCM fall broadly into two areas:

- > Operational—Providing assistance to individual injured employees through a tailored and planned case management approach and utilising the expertise of a Workplace Rehabilitation Provider (WRP) where needed to achieve optimal recovery; and
- > Strategic—Managing broader issues of RTW in the organisation.

RCM CORE CAPABILITIES

1. Rehabilitation frameworks

Technical knowledge and application of rehabilitation management frameworks, systems and processes, including early intervention and evidence-based approaches.

2. Case management methods

Understand and apply effective planning, coordination and review methods which result in quality RTW outcomes.

3. Stakeholder engagement/management

Build and manage effective partnerships that engage stakeholders in understanding the issues, identifying innovative solutions and in supporting implementation.

4. Values and attributes

Show integrity and respect for others. Display drive and resilience, and adopt a positive approach.

5. Workers' compensation legislation and relevant laws

Knowledge of the Comcare workers' compensation scheme, the SRC Act and other relevant legislation, which may apply in a given case. Identify where technical support, information and guidance is available and seek this guidance and assistance when appropriate.

REHABILITATION CASE MANAGER CORE CAPABILITIES

1. Rehabilitation frameworks

Technical knowledge and application of rehabilitation management frameworks, systems and processes including early intervention and evidence-based approaches.

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| 1.1 | Establish rehabilitation need and potential for return to work | <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Identify the potential for early intervention> Understand the environment for return to work> Assess the need for a rehabilitation assessment and rehabilitation program and communicate this to the employee> Ensure rehabilitation assessments are undertaken applying section 36 of the SRC Act> Understand the nature and status of a claim> Triage high risk and/or multi-factorial claims for appropriate rehabilitation as early as practicable> Evaluate and limit risks which may adversely affect RTW outcomes |
| 1.2 | Apply the principles of the health benefits of good work | <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Identify elements of “good work” for supporting safe and durable recovery to work> Where possible emphasise the positive impact return to work can have on overall safe and durable return to work> Adopt the principle of recovery at work |
| 1.3 | Where required, engage and manage a Comcare approved WRP to deliver return to work services | <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Understand the conditions of approval for WRPs as defined by Comcare and the Heads of Workers’ Compensation (HWCA) framework> Select and engage a Comcare approved WRP (noting those which may have existing agreements), matching expertise with nature and complexity of the case> Negotiate and establish expectations with the WRP specifying timeframes for service delivery and desired rehabilitation outcomes> Determine a rehabilitation program in accordance with section 37 of the SRC Act> Monitor and manage WRP services and costs, applying the Comcare standards for WRPs> Provide feedback to the WRP and Comcare on the quality of service delivery based on service level agreements and other relevant measures |

1.4 Coordinate the development of a return to work plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Develop rehabilitation programs¹ to facilitate and ensure early, safe and durable return to work outcomes > Ensure consultation occurs between the employee, employer, WRP and treatment providers in developing the rehabilitation program > Collaborate with the Claims Manager regarding progress and next steps > Undertake high level negotiation and judgement to manage objectives and outcomes in complex cases > Ensure a program of suitable work duties is outlined in the program and where relevant, reasonable adjustment principles are practiced > Ensure the program provides details of: specific rehabilitation goals; objectives for the employee to achieve; key responsibilities of participants in the process; services to be provided and; estimates of the cost and duration of the services to be approved when an WRP is involved
1.5 Monitor the progress of a return to work plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Monitor the employee's progress against the goals and objectives of the rehabilitation program > Ensure that stakeholder meetings are arranged to facilitate the achievement of the rehabilitation goal > Amend the rehabilitation program if required to ensure the goal is relevant and realistic > Maintain appropriate communication with treatment providers to ensure the rehabilitation program and suitable duties are consistent with medical advice
1.6 Coordinate case closure and provide post return to work support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Complete the Closure Record upon achievement of the rehabilitation goals and distribute a copy of the Closure Record to relevant stakeholders > Consider the need for post case closure support to the employee and supervisor (assuming RTW is to the same employer) to sustain the goal of the rehabilitation program
1.7 Maintain records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Gather, record and distribute information specific to the case in accordance with organisational and legislative requirements (including privacy principles) > Ensure case records are secure, accessible and accurate
1.8 Contribute to rehabilitation management systems development and review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Develop and maintain systems to enable early notification of injuries and ensure consistent rehabilitation management practices > Contribute to objective, target and performance measure setting for improved rehabilitation outcomes > Where practicable, develop or adopt a preferred provider system for selecting Comcare approved WRPs > Collect injury management and return to work outcome data and provide measurement and analysis of this data to the senior executive group

¹ Rehabilitation Program: Program developed under section 37 of the SRC Act. It is a structured series of activities and assistance to maintain or return an employee in suitable employment, and maintain or improve an employee's activities of daily living. A rehabilitation program may include a return to work schedule/plan which details the employee's hours, days, tasks and limitations etc.

2. Case management methods

Understand and apply effective planning, coordination and review methods which result in quality RTW outcomes.

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| 2.1 | Adopt a methodology for the planning, coordination and management of cases | <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Manage cases in accordance with organisational procedures, including early intervention practices, risk identification and assessment, structured reporting and coaching support> Ensure cases are regularly reviewed based on timeframes relevant to injury |
| 2.2 | Provide leadership in injury management | <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Maintain technical expertise in best practice rehabilitation management> Identify and apply lessons learned from previous relevant experiences to current case management approaches> Work in collaboration with claims managers to understand medical conditions and their treatments> Promote and educate stakeholders about the health benefits of work and recovery at work |

3. Stakeholder engagement/management

Build and manage effective partnerships that engage stakeholders in understanding the issues, identifying innovative solutions and in supporting implementation.

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| 3.1 | Develop trust and confidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Cultivate open, honest and transparent communication with the participants in the rehabilitation process> Maintain a consultative approach with the employee, treatment providers, the WRP (where applicable) and workplace to develop actions towards shared rehabilitation goals> Ensure the employee is aware of their rights and responsibilities under the SRC Act> Promote a return to work culture |
| 3.2 | Manage networks and relationships | <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Understand and communicate the roles of each participant in the rehabilitation process> Influence senior management to take a proactive, visible approach to health and safety and ensure suitable duties are provided |
| 3.3 | Manage difficulties to achieve positive outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Anticipate difficulties in the rehabilitation process as early as possible> Consider innovative strategies to achieve rehabilitation program goals> Consider holistic rehabilitation case management with regard to the Rehabilitation Flags Model (or biopsychosocial factors) |

4. Values and attributes

Show integrity and respect for others. Display drive and resilience, and adopt a positive approach.

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| 4.1 | Show respect for diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives | > Use language and concepts appropriate to cultural and physical differences |
| 4.2 | Be authentic and show integrity | > Foster a supportive workplace which encourages safe work practices and early reporting of injuries |
| 4.3 | Develop resilience and perseverance | > Self-assess coping abilities and strategies regularly and if and when required, seek support and assistance in de-briefing cases
> Persevere in achieving optimal outcomes for the organisation |
| 4.4 | Show sound judgement and demonstrate a sensible, practical approach | > Practice sound judgement and decision-making with an awareness of the implications which may result
> Provide flexibility and adaptability to changes in programs, medical conditions, workplace conditions |

5. Workers' compensation legislation and relevant laws

Knowledge of the Comcare workers' compensation scheme, the SRC Act, and other relevant legislation. Identify where technical support, information and guidance is available and seek this guidance and assistance when appropriate.

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| 5.1 | Understand and apply Part III of the SRC Act | > Identify and apply sections of the SRC Act which are critical to the RCM function/role and delegations
> Recognise the purpose and intent of the SRC Act and apply this in the management of workers' compensation cases
> Engage with internal and external topic experts to understand and apply legislation |
| 5.2 | Understand the Comcare workers' compensation scheme | > Understand how claim costs impact liabilities
> Understand the financial costs of workplace injuries within the organisation and the Comcare scheme
> Understand relevant case law with regard to SRC Act rehabilitation provisions |
| 5.3 | Demonstrate an appreciation of various other legislation which may apply in any given case | > Identify when other legislative pieces may apply to cases, e.g. in respect of fraud, privacy and other health services legislation. |