



Australian Government

Comcare

## RESOURCE FOR TREATING HEALTH PRACTITIONERS

# A GUIDE FOR GENERAL PRACTITIONERS TO MANAGE WORK RELATED INJURY

As a GP you play a vital role in the rehabilitation and return to work (RTW) of people who have been injured at work, including promoting the health benefits of good work and advising on work capacity. This guide will help you manage the recovery pathway for an injured worker and provide key timeframes to consider within the claims process. Understanding roles and timeframes in the return to work process can assist you to support and outline expectations for your patients.

**Did you know** research has consistently shown that patients who are given a RTW date by their treating health practitioner are three times more likely to RTW.

To clarify the expectations for managing work related injury, Comcare has developed a new national one-page guide, that is relevant to injured workers in all Australian workers' compensation schemes.

The guide provides an overview of:

- The workers' compensation process and key timeframes
- Statutory function of medical practitioners
- Roles of case managers/RTW coordinators and employer obligations
- Critical elements to successfully complete certificates of capacity.

**A guide for General Practitioners to manage work related injury**

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**Timeline:**

- 2 weeks:** Claim lodged by worker or employer (with certificate of capacity drafted).
- 4 weeks:** Most workers who make a claim can be back at work.
- 13 weeks:** Your patient has a 25 per cent chance of still being off work of two years if they can't get back at work by 13 weeks.<sup>(1)</sup>
- 6 months:** Any injury/fitness that has persisted for 12 months would benefit from a comprehensive clinical review.
- 12 months:** Your patient has a 44 per cent chance of still being off work at two years if they are not back at work at six months.<sup>(2)</sup>

**Key Elements for Certificate of Capacity:**

- Date of injury:** The date a patient says their injury or illness commenced.
- Diagnosis:** A clear description of the condition or injury is critical to help set expectations about recovery with your patient and others involved in their care.
- Treatment and Management Plan:** An outline of what's required to support your patient's recovery.
- Information about referral (if any):** Details about other treating health providers to inform others involved in the case.
- Capacity Assessment:** You are required to provide a medical opinion on the worker's functional capacity and limitations.

**Other Key Information:**

- GP's (Medical Practitioners) statutory function:** GPs have a national statutory role in setting patient's capacity for work or rehabilitation.
- Case managers/Return to Work (RTW) coordinators:** In most instances, a case manager or RTW coordinator will be assigned to support your patient.
- Employers (workplaces) obligations:** Employers are legally obligated to support your patient's return to safe and suitable work.
- Set a return to work date:** Provide a return to work date that is realistic and achievable.

(1) Johnson D, Day T. Return-to-Work: Return to Work after Injury: A Study for the Victorian WorkCover Authority. Melbourne: Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research; 2012. (2) Boshart 2010.

Download the guide for use within your article:  
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For more information on your role in the return to work process, visit [Medical practitioners | Comcare](#). For more information on the benefits of using certificates of capacity and how to complete a Comcare certificate of capacity please visit [Certificate of capacity | Comcare](#).