
Returning to work after major trauma

Summary

- Getting back to work can be good for your health and wellbeing.
 - Start your plan to return to work as early as possible.
 - An occupational rehabilitation provider can help you with the return to work process.
 - Cooperate in the return to work process to meet your legal obligations.
 - Ask your GP to write details about what you can do on your WorkSafe Certificate of Capacity.
 - If you need help, contact your employer, Return to Work Coordinator, WorkSafe Agent or the WorkSafe Advisory Service.
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As you recover from a major trauma event you may start thinking about getting back to work. Work provides both financial and social support and can help your recovery.

You do not have to be fully recovered to get back to work - returning to work can be part of your recovery.

You may need to return to work gradually, work shorter hours or do different duties. A GP or healthcare worker will need to assess what you can and can't do to safely return to work.

WorkSafe Victoria

WorkSafe Victoria is a government organisation that helps injured workers get back in to the workforce and provides compensation following a work-related injury or illness. It also provides WorkCover insurance for employers and enforces Victoria's occupational health and safety laws.

WorkSafe Victoria provides information for workers who are planning to return to work, along with information on your return to work obligations.

Returning to work after traumatic injury

Getting back to work after an injury can be good for your health and wellbeing, so the earlier you start planning to return to work, the better.

Your return-to-work obligations

Aside from the benefits to your health and wellbeing, you also have legal obligations to do what you can to return to work. These are:

- Make reasonable efforts to return to work in suitable or pre-injury employment.
- Make reasonable efforts to actively participate and cooperate in planning for your return to work.
- Actively use an occupational rehabilitation service if provided, and cooperate with the provider of that service.
- Actively participate and cooperate in assessments of your capacity for work, rehabilitation progress or future employment prospects.
- Actively participate and cooperate with the WorkSafe Agent in an interview to enhance your opportunities to return to work.

If you don't meet these obligations, it can affect your weekly payments (income entitlements).

Contact your WorkSafe Agent

Your employer will have a WorkSafe Agent. The Agent will be your contact for making a claim and for your subsequent return to work.

You may be assisted through the return to work process by an occupational rehabilitation provider. Occupational rehab providers are approved by your WorkSafe Agent, and you will be able to choose from a list of three providers.

Discuss your return to work with your treating health practitioner

Ask your treating health practitioner to fill out a WorkSafe Certificate of Capacity with you. This will include details about your injury, your capacity for work, and what aspects of your usual role you can do. A Certificate of Capacity provides your employers with the information they need to appropriately and safely plan your return to work.

Discuss your return to work with your employer

Talk to your employer about your progress and the parts of your job you think you can do. If you haven't heard from your employer, you may consider giving them a call.

Your employer will assign you a Return to Work Coordinator. This is someone at work who will assist you in meeting your return to work obligations.

Ask your treating health practitioner and employer to talk to each other about the plans for your return to work and the suitable duties that are available for you. You may be able to return to your pre-injury employment (the same activities and hours that you used to do), or you may need to return to 'suitable employment', which is a modified version of your previous role or alternative duties.

You can choose to have someone represent, assist and support you in the return to work process (this person cannot be a legal practitioner).

Staying positive can help you get back to work

Staying positive and keeping active after an injury can benefit your rehabilitation as well as your general wellbeing, and help you get back to work. The following tips may assist your rehabilitation:

- Focus on what you can do, rather than what you can't.
- Talk to your treating health practitioner about how you may be able to stay active.
- Talk to your family about how they can support you and help you to get better.
- If you're away from work, talk to your workmates about how you can stay connected with what's happening at work.
- Try not to get frustrated if things don't always go smoothly. Rehabilitation can take time and requires persistence.

Where to get help

If you need help at any stage during the return to work process, contact your employer, your Return to Work Coordinator, your WorkSafe Agent or the WorkSafe Advisory Service.

Visit the [**WorkSafe Victoria website**](https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au).

This page has been produced in consultation with and approved by:

WorkSafe

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