

## **Early & Safe Return to Work Policy: Work-Related Illness or Injury**

<b>Reviewed Date</b>		<b>Number</b>	HS0117
<b>Revised Date</b>	October 5, 2022	<b>Approved Date</b>	June 12, 2013

### **Introduction**

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) is committed to providing a safe workplace for our employees. Preventing work-related illness or injury is our primary goal and attempting to provide accommodation after a work-related illness or injury is our legal obligation under the Workplace Safety & Insurance Act (WSIA). SMDHU and its employees are therefore required to co-operate and participate fully in the return to work process under the WSIA.

Our Early & Safe Return to Work program attempts where possible to provide accommodation for an employee who is temporarily or permanently unable to return to their duties as a result of an occupational injury or illness. The program provides opportunities to perform the regular job with modifications or, when available, to perform alternate temporary work that meets the injured employee's functional abilities.

### **Purpose**

To establish guidelines for an effective return to work for work-related ill or injured employees, in a safe and timely manner, and to accommodate where reasonably possible within the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU), any employee unable to perform their regular duties.

This policy is applicable to all those under SMDHU WSIB coverage.

### **Legislative Authority**

Workplace Safety & Insurance Act S.O. 1997, CHAPTER 16

[http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_97w16\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_97w16_e.htm)

Human Right Code R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER H.19

[http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_90h19\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90h19_e.htm)

### **Policy Definitions and Interpretation**

**RTW** – Return to Work

**JHSC** – Joint Health & Safety Committee

**WSIA** – Workplace Safety & Insurance Act

**WSIB** – Workplace Safety & Insurance Board – the implementer of the WSIA and injury/illness benefit provider

**Treating Medical Professional** – licensed medical professionals (i.e. doctor, physiotherapist, psychiatrist, etc.) with the injured/ill employee in their care, providing current treatment to, who may speak/provide medical opinion of

**Restricted, Modified or Accommodated Work / Duties** – tasks that an employee would perform in an alternative fashion to their normal process or duties but that meets the functional abilities of the employee and the need of the employer

**Lost Time Injury/Illness (LTI)** – the number of hours of work time that an employee misses as a result of their work-related illness/injury

**SMDHU Workplace Illness/Injury Package** – the collection of documents required to be completed when a work-related illness/injury occurs

## **Policy**

All employees are required to immediately report all workplace illness or injuries to their Immediate Supervisor. SMDHU will then endeavor to provide an Early & Safe Return to Work Program that facilitates both the rehabilitation of work-related ill/injured employees and lessens the amount of any lost time illness/injuries at work. SMDHU shall work in co-operation with the ill/injured employee and their treating medical professionals and attempt to accommodate the safe return to work of employees. Each case will be assessed on an individual basis with the support of the involved employee, treating medical professional, Immediate Supervisor, HR, and the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board.

All employees with a work-related illness/injury are required by law to co-operate in their return to work program. The RTW Program is therefore a plan that recognizes the employer's, union's and employee's legal responsibility to participate and co-operate in the return and effective rehabilitation of those employees injured at work.

Management will refer to the SMDHU Early and Safe Return to Work Procedures Document for returning employees to work.

## **ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

*It will be the responsibility of the Human Resources (HR) Team to ensure that:*

- The coordination, implementation, and maintenance of the SMDHU Early and Safe Return to Work program and related processes, in conjunction with the employee, Immediate Supervisor and WSIB, are carried out in accordance with the SMDHU Early and Safe Return to Work Procedures Document.
- All medical information and correspondence is kept strictly confidential and separate from all other personnel information.

*It will be the responsibility of all Supervisors, Managers and Vice Presidents to ensure that they:*

- Support and comply with this policy and ensure related processes are carried out.
- Facilitate employee return to work initiatives by arranging suitable modified work.
- Assist in coordinating employees returning to work in conjunction with HR and in accordance with the SMDHU Early and Safe Return to Work Procedures Document.

*It will be the responsibility of all injured or ill employees to ensure that they:*

- Immediately report to SMDHU (Immediate Supervisor or HR) all workplace illnesses and injuries to allow SMDHU to immediately facilitate their RTW.
- If required, immediately seek medical attention for their workplace illness or injury and ensure the SMDHU Workplace Illness/Injury Package is completed.
- Following medical attention, immediately return to work with the completed SMDHU Workplace Illness/Injury Package and advise the Supervisor of their medical status. A completed copy of the entire SMDHU Workplace Illness/Injury Package, including either a WSIB FAF or a WSIB Form 8, must be immediately sent to HR.
- Cooperate in their RTW and abide by the policies, practices, and recommendations of SMDHU, WSIB, and their treating medical professionals regarding their workplace illness or injury in order to promote a safe and healthy rehabilitation.

*It is a legal responsibility of all parties to maintain regular communication and exchange of information.*

**Procedures**

If the employee is not able to return to their pre-injury/illness duties due to a workplace injury or illness, the SMDHU will attempt to accommodate the employee as soon as possible. The SMDHU will make every effort to provide meaningful modified work to meet its obligations under the WSIA. As per the WSIA, SMDHU shall attempt to accommodate the work or the workplace for the worker to the extent that the accommodation does not cause the employer undue hardship. The SMDHU will use the following hierarchy as a guideline to returning employees to work:

1. to their pre-injury job with no restrictions and no accommodation
2. to their pre-injury job with restrictions and accommodation
3. to a suitable, available job with no training and no accommodation
4. to a suitable, available job with training and accommodation

For more information see the Early & Safe Return to Work Procedures Document (work-related).

**Related Policies**

SMDHU Injury on Duty HS0105

SMDHU Early & Safe Return to Work Procedures Document (work-related)

**Related Forms**

N/A

**Final Approval Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

Review/Revision History:

Revised October 5, 2022 VP's