

Modified Work

Being able to offer an injured worker some modifications to their usual job can help to get them back at work safely and quickly. Modifications might include providing alternative work, lighter tasks, or making temporary changes to the work environment or working hours.

Here are some proven tips for providing safe modified work during an injured worker's recovery:

- Work co-operatively to find solutions. Base your ideas for modified work on both the doctor's assessment and the injured worker's opinions about what they feel they can do safely.
- Focus on what the worker can do right now. Don't waste energy dwelling on restrictions and limitations. Remember the goal is to get them back to their usual job as quickly and as safely as possible.
- Identify tasks the worker can do safely. Make a list of the worker's usual tasks and estimate what kinds of physical demands each one makes on the worker. For example:
 - If he or she is required to lift objects, how heavy are they? How often is lifting required?
 - Does the job usually require a lot of sitting, standing or walking around? If so, how much?
 - Does the person have to drive as part of the job?
 - Does the job involve reaching, twisting, kneeling or bending? How much?

Having a list like this for each job ahead of time is a good way to be prepared to deal with a workplace injury. Providing this information to the worker's doctor can streamline the process from the very beginning.

- Go through the list with the worker and decide what tasks are safe for them.
- Let them know it is okay to ask for help.
- Communicate about the worker's progress regularly. Gradually get them back to doing their normal tasks as soon as possible.

Most importantly, modified work needs to be meaningful and productive. The worker needs to be able to continue to make a valued contribution to the company. It's important for everyone's morale and the success of your business.