



Return-to-work tips for managers

These tips can help you create a supportive and smooth return for employees coming back after an absence. Remember to reach out to any resources available to you (e.g. Human Resources (HR), Occupational Health Services (OHS), etc.) to help you get ready for your employee's return-to-work (RTW).



Up to one week before the employee's return:

- Have a RTW meeting/call with the employee before the start of the RTW plan. Use this meeting/call to outline hours, location and tasks. Take note: employees in a union may also want you to include their union rep in the meeting/call.
- Ensure that any equipment or required workplace accommodations are ready for the employee's RTW. That equipment could be IDs, passwords, and security cards. You should also make sure that the employee has meaningful work to complete upon their return. Outline a schedule that details when you will introduce certain work tasks and duties.
- Ask the employee what you can share with their co-workers about their absence and RTW. Make sure that you maintain their privacy.
- Let the team know of their co-worker's RTW plans and dates (while respecting the employee's privacy). Include details on any impact to workloads and/or job duties for those co-workers affected.
- Plan for any new training and/or job shadowing to help the employee transition back to work. Share the training/shadowing schedule with the employee. It's important to consider that full day training can be hard to manage. Consider breaking the training into smaller portions.



During the employee's first day back:

- Meet with the employee (virtually or in person). Welcome the employee back personally and remember to make it a positive experience.
- Review their work tasks and the RTW schedule before the employee begins their work.
- Update the employee on any changes in the workplace that may have happened during their absence. Bring them up to speed on any key events and/or activities taking place in the next little while.



During the employee's first week back to work:

- Discuss and agree on a brief, scheduled check-in period during the first few weeks of the employee's return. Base the frequency and length of the check-in on your mutual preferences, availability and scheduling. Keep in mind that the overall focus of these check-ins is to support the employee.
- Encourage your employee to bring any issues to your attention so you can address them as they come up.
- Remind your employee of other resources available to them during their return to work. These resources could be
 - a "buddy,"
 - HR,
 - Employee Assistance Program (EAP), or
 - their Disability Case Manager (DCM) or Rehabilitation Consultant (RC) at Sun Life.



In some cases, a gradual RTW plan can be an important part of the recovery process. This type of RTW plan allows an employee to slowly regain their physical and cognitive abilities at work. By returning on a gradual basis, they can also build confidence in their work abilities. The employee will do meaningful work at an appropriate pace. And they can count on support from you, their employer.

During a gradual RTW, until the employee has returned full time with regular duties.

- Meet with the employee weekly to ensure that the RTW plan is progressing well. These weekly check-ins help you confirm that the employee is able to meet the expectations of the RTW plan.
- Sun Life's DCM or RC will be in regular contact with you during the employee's gradual RTW. Update the DCM or RC on how the employee is doing.
- If the RTW plan is not going as planned, contact your available resources as soon as possible. These resources could be HR, IOHS, DCM and/or a RC at Sun Life. You can use these resources to discuss options and access their support to assist you.

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