



10 Ways Employers Can Help Injured Employees Avoid Obstacles to Recovery

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1) Listen to employees when they have bodily complaints that they think are important. Don't brush them off.

2) Reassure employees that their aches and pains are legitimate, without always requiring them to first be "legitimized" by a doctor.

3) Give employees structured options for expressing frustrations, safety concerns, interpersonal differences, anxieties etc. BESIDES filing a Worker Comp claim! Examples – safety committee, EAP, grievance mechanism.

4) Place workers in appropriate jobs, not into those in which they are destined to fail (example – demoting a senior employee to a heavy, entry level job they haven't done since they were young).

5) After each Worker Comp appointment, ask the employee how their doctor or therapy visit went. Were they satisfied? Was a thorough evaluation done? Was the employee told what to expect about how things would go? Are next steps clear? If not, help the employee find out who to call to fix these things.

6) When your injured employee describes their treatment plan to you, have the following checklist in mind. If any of these areas seem neglected, partner with your Worker Comp insurer to solve the problem.

- Is the treatment plan as brief and straightforward as reasonable?
- Are needed tests or treatments being done in a timely manner? Are unnecessary delays solved or avoided?
- Is a single doctor in charge? Or is it confusing which doctor is the captain of the ship?
- Has the employee been told what to expect? Have they been coached on how long it takes most people to recover from this type of injury or surgery? Do they understand what results are expected from their treatment, and when?
- Are they allowed to remain close to their working life? Are appropriate accommodations being made so they can stay at work, and as close to their home department as able?
- Have they received understandable medical information about their injury? Do they know what the problem is? Have they been directed to appropriate information resources, like web sites, books, and/or health educators?

7) Provide alternate work right away to accommodate their restrictions, then be ready to begin a transition toward regular duty once it has been ok'ed.

8) Keep the employee involved with the company as time passes in the course of their treatment. They should remain active in all dimensions of work life that they can still do, including social. They must remain a welcomed member of the team, and not an outcast. "Absence makes the case grow longer . . ."

9) Reward the employee for each step they make toward full recovery, publically acknowledge their effort, reassure them that a safe workplace will be provided, ensure any safety issues that lead to a work injury in the first place are now corrected.

10) Create a Culture of Care in which co-workers support the injured employee as they return to work. It's good corporate citizenship, and it benefits everyone!

