Rehabilitation and Return to Work Policy

Overview

At nbn we are safe, disciplined and reliable. We act on our responsibilities to identify and remove potential and recognised risks to the health and safety of workers and other people.

In the event of work-related injury or illness, nbn is committed to assisting workers to achieve a safe return to work, in a way that will facilitate their best possible recovery. In keeping with best practice injury management, nbn focuses on early intervention, active case management and outcomes-based rehabilitation to enable optimal return to work.

Purpose

The intent of this policy is to describe the Rehabilitation and Return to Work procedure that nbn has developed and that will apply where an employee of nbn sustains an injury or suffers from an illness arising out of the conduct of nbn's undertaking or arising out of work performed by the employee in connection with nbn's undertaking.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of nbn who experience a work related injury or illness.

Visitors, consultants, contractors, employees of contractors and consultants, persons employed through labour hire agencies and volunteers are not covered by this policy and should be referred to their own employers policies.

Policy

The Rehabilitation and Return to Work procedure is a workplace program that assists injured and/or ill nbn employees to return to work when it is safe to do so.

Rehabilitation aims to provide an early, safe and sustainable return to work for employees suffering from work-related injury or illness by using the workplace itself as a vital part of the rehabilitation process.

nbn is committed to the rehabilitation of injured employees.

nbn aims to manage the process of rehabilitation in the workplace to assist injured employees to recover and return to work. nbn aims to:
- Facilitate a return to work for injured and/or ill employees as soon as it is safe to do so and to provide information and support to assist an injured and/or ill employee to return to work;
- Determine the needs of the injured and/or ill employee by liaising with the employee, the nominated treating doctor, our workers’ compensation insurance provider (Comcare) and other relevant team members;
- Provide early access to rehabilitation services, for example accredited workplace rehabilitation providers where required;
- Develop/review, implement and monitor the injured and/or ill employee’s return to work plan in conjunction with the employee, manager, our workers’ compensation insurance provider (Comcare), the nominated treating doctor and the approved workplace rehabilitation provider;
- Provide suitable alternative duties for an injured and/or ill employee as an integral part of the rehabilitation and return to work process;
- Consult with employees and where applicable any employee representatives, to assist the rehabilitation and return to work process to operate effectively;
- Provide employees with workers’ compensation claims information including the process and how/when/which accredited workplace rehabilitation provider may be engaged and if an external medical examination is needed for returning to work;
- Continuously improve nbn’s health and safety management systems and return to work processes; and
- Advise injured and/or ill employees about their role and obligations to participate in the rehabilitation and return to work process.

**Injury Management, Rehabilitation and Return to Work**

When an employee sustains an injury or illness and has had three continuous days off work, nbn will arrange a suitable person, being a trained member of staff or a representative from our Approved Workplace Rehabilitation Provider to contact the injured employee to provide advice and assistance with:

- Completing workers’ compensation forms;
- Explaining the employee’s rights, obligations, benefits, rehabilitation and return to work procedures;
- Where appropriate, engaging an approved workplace rehabilitation provider; and
- Arranging a return to work plan in consultation with the nominated treating doctor.

The Rehabilitation Case Manager will work with our workers’ compensation insurance provider (Comcare), the employee, employee’s manager and the employee’s nominated treating doctor in developing and implementing a Return to Work Plan for an injured/ill employee.

The Return to Work Plan may include alternative or suitable work duties/hours and/or a graduated return to work. These will be approved by the nominated treating doctor or by the workplace rehabilitation provider in consultation with the treating doctor based on medical evidence.

Some injuries may require extended injury management. nbn will assist employees who are medically unable to return to their pre-injury duties including the investigation of alternative work within nbn.

**Suitable Alternative Duties**

Suitable alternative duties are work duties, agreed between the Rehabilitation Case Manager and an injured employee, which facilitate the injured employee’s rehabilitation and return to work. Suitable alternative duties must comply with a Comcare Certificate of Capacity or equivalent document issued by the employee’s nominated treating doctor. Suitable alternative duties may include:
Parts of the job the employee was performing before the injury;
Duties at the same or a different worksite;
Different hours and/or modified duties;
Different duties altogether;
Full time or part time duties; and
Training opportunities.

These duties will be identified after consultation with all relevant parties and will be specified in writing and reviewed on a regular basis.

**Workplace Rehabilitation Provider (WRP)**

Workplace Rehabilitation Providers are available to assist when required in the return to work of employees who suffer a workplace injury or illness. When the Return to Work Plan is complex and requires specialist rehabilitation expertise it may be appropriate to refer to an **nbn** nominated accredited WRP.

**nbn** has engaged an accredited WRP who are Comcare approved.

**Employee’ Rights**

Employees have the right to:

- Nominate a treating doctor who will be consulted in relation to injury management, rehabilitation and return to work planning;
- Be involved in the planning of their rehabilitation and return to work;
- Receive appropriate entitlements in accordance with applicable legislation determined by Comcare;
- Be provided with information about their entitlements, rights and responsibilities;
- Access documents relating to their workers compensation claim, if a workers compensation claim is lodged;
- Request an assessment of their capability to undertake a rehabilitation program;
- Request reasonably practicable adjustments to the workplace to minimise the risk of further injury and to assist the employee to safely remain at, or return to, work based on their individual medical needs; and
- Be supported by a case manager who will organise the development of an individually tailored rehabilitation program.

**Further Information**

Please contact your Manager or the Human Resource Support Centre if you require additional information in relation to this policy.

Should you have immediate concerns regarding a safety matter contact your Manager. If your manager is unavailable you may also contact a member of the HSE Team.