

## ACC Return to Work / Stay at Work Planning Meeting - Managers Guide

### What is a Return to Work Planning Meeting?

A Return to Work (RTW) / Stay at Work (SAW) planning meeting is an early intervention, collaborative rehabilitation discussion involving the injured employee, the employer, and a skilled health professional. The purpose is to develop a safe, individualised plan that supports the employee's return to their pre-injury role and duties. The RTW/SAW process promotes a structured, safe, and graduated return to work, helping to improve recovery outcomes and reduce the risk of prolonged absence from work.

### Purpose of the RTW / SAW Planning Meeting

The primary purposes of a RTW / SAW planning meeting are to:

- To understand the employee's recovery needs, work environment, and pre-injury role
- Support the employee's recovery by using work as part of rehabilitation, enabling an early, safe, and sustainable return to work even if the employee has not fully recovered
- Align work duties with medical advice, as outlined in the employee's medical certificate e.g. "Fit for Selected Work"
- Clarify expectations, responsibilities, and timeframes for recovery at work
- Reduce the risk of re-injury or prolonged absence through planned, monitored adjustments
- Improve recovery outcomes for injured employees
- Reduce long-term absence and productivity disruption
- To develop a personalised RTW / SAW plan

### Key Functions of a RTW / SAW Planning Meeting

- **Review medical guidance**
  - Discuss what the employee can and cannot do safely, based on the medical certificate
  - Confirm any restrictions, suitable duties or graduated hours
- **Identify suitable or modified duties**
  - Explore alternative tasks, reduced workloads, modified work or adjusted hours
  - Focus on the employee's capabilities over restrictions
- **Develop or update a RTW Plan**  
Agree on:
  - duties
  - hours and progression
  - review dates
  - responsibilities
- **Document the plan clearly so everyone understands expectations**

ACC Return to Work / Stay at Work Planning Meeting - Managers Guide	Version: 1	Issue date: May 2026	Review Date: May 2029
Approved by: Associate Director, Health, Safety and Wellbeing		Document Owner: Associate Director, Health, Safety and Wellbeing	
Content Manager: Health, Safety & Wellbeing Manager		Once printed this document is uncontrolled	Page 1 of 2

## Manager Responsibilities in RTW / SAW Planning

Managers are required to:

- Participate actively and constructively in RTW / SAW discussions
- Consider the impact on the team and manager. When identifying reasonable adjustments, ensure proposed duties, hours, or workload changes do not impose a disproportionate or undue burden on the team or the line manager. If a proposed adjustment would cause significant operational hardship, discuss alternative options with the one up manager, HR, DoFO to find a workable solution that balances the employee's recovery needs with operational capability
- Consider: Is fixed-term cover required? Or would duties be absorbed by the team? When considering whether a plan is workable, could you sustain this for three-months? If the plan needs to be extended to six-month would this be sustainable?
- Keep information confidential and only share with consent
- Discuss any concerns or barriers with the health professional or Wellnz Case Manager

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