

# UNDERSTANDING RETURN-TO-WORK (rtw)

Instructor Guide

## Safety Talk Overview:

**What & Why?** Safety Talks are a method to refresh an employee’s knowledge and skills, maintain their interest in safety and illustrate the organization’s commitment to creating a healthy & safe work environment.

**Who & When?** Generally, these Safety Talk meetings are led by a supervisor, member of the JHSC, or Worker H&S Representative and should be mandatory for all crew members to attend. The content should be focused on a single topic. Safety Talks can be performed on a weekly basis or before the start of a new scope of work and should be about 15 minutes in duration.

go2HR developed this safety talk template for employers to customize and use for any topic in their organization. The Participant Handout should include information that you hope the worker will retain from the safety talk content and should be handed out during the safety talk for workers to reference later. Feel free to use it at your discretion.

**Understanding RTW**

**Overview:** The Return-to-Work (RTW) program helps workers who sustain a workplace injury or illness stay at work safely or safely return to work as soon as they can. Rather than waiting until someone is 100% recovered, the RTW Program supports gradual reintegration through suitable work that matches the worker’s abilities. Workplace injuries most commonly include physical injuries, exposure illnesses, or psychological injuries.

**Responsibilities:** The success of the program hinges on the active cooperation and participation from all workplace parties including workers, managers/supervisors, the employer, RTW coordinator (if there is one), and first aid attendants. It’s important for everyone to understand their role and the roles of others.

**Safety Talk Outline (using the handout below):**

1. Introduce why it’s important to talk about the RTW program

2. Discuss the roles within the program and what to expect if you get injured

3. Answer any questions that arise from staff or write them down for follow-up

**Additional Resources:**

- [WorkSafeBC – RTW Worker Information (i.e., Worker Fact Sheet, FAQs, Introduction Video)](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/claims/return-to-work/workers-return-to-work-information)

- [go2HR – Injury Management](https://www.go2hr.ca/health-safety/injury-management)

## Topic Overview:

## Safety Talk Facilitator Guidance

🞏 **Introduce** the topic and why it’s important

🞏 **Discuss** the associated hazards and likely incidents

🞏 **Tour** the work zone identifying hazardous areas

🞏 **Distribute** the Participant Handout

🞏 **Use** the info above to guide the discussion

🞏 **Document** the talk using the Safety Talk Record

🞏 **Explain** what controls are used to minimize the risks

🞏 **Remind** employees about applicable PPE usage

🞏 **Emphasize** the importance of safe work procedures

🞏 **Ask questions** to generate group discussion

🞏 **Answer any questions** or concerns they might have

🞏 **Set a good example** by working safely at all time

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Safety Talk Record

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Discussion Leader:** | **Date:** |
| **Department:** | Time: |

### Attendees (Please print your name and sign beside it. If you are a contractor, also include your company name):

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### Near miss/incidents and investigations reviewed: ☐ None this month

### Any questions or concerns from workers?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action needed:** | **Person responsible:** | **Due date:** | **Completed date:** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

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| --- | --- |
| **Supervisor/Manager print name & sign:** | **Date:** |

### Reviewed by:

# UNDERSTANDING RETURN-TO-Work (RTW)

**GOALS OF THE RTW PROGRAM:**

 Support worker recovery and well-being, helping workers stay connected to the workplace during recovery

 Reduce time away from work, and promote a respectful, inclusive return to regular duties as soon as safely possible

**OVERVIEW OF RESPONSIBILITIES:**

** Workers:**

- Report all injuries or symptoms to supervisors or first aid personnel immediately

- Seek medical attention when needed and share relevant information with the RTW Coordinator/Supervisor

- Cooperate with the RTW Plan and stay in communication about your recovery

- Follow medical advice and accept suitable work unless there’s a valid reason not to

** Supervisors/Managers:**

- Provide support, offer modified or suitable work, and maintain regular contact

- Work with the RTW Coordinator to develop and adjust RTW Plans

- Keep communication respectful, timely, and focused on recovery

** RTW Coordinators:**

- Oversee the RTW process, track progress, and ensure the plan is followed

- Provide support to workers, supervisors/managers, and WorkSafeBC when needed

** First Aid Attendants:**

- Assess the injury and provide care on site

- Help workers understand the next steps

- Notify the supervisor or RTW Coordinator if additional care is needed

**WHAT TO EXPECT IF YOU’RE INJURED:**

 You’ll receive first aid and/or medical care depending on the severity of your injury

 You’ll be asked to bring documentation (e.g., Functional Abilities Form) to your healthcare provider to identify abilities

 You may be offered suitable work (e.g., modified or alternate duties) that align with your abilities

 You’ll stay in regular contact with your supervisor or RTW Coordinator to track recovery/progress

 The duties will be adjusted as you recover, until you can return to your regular work

**LEGAL DUTIES:**

** Duty to Cooperate:** Employers and workers must work together to support a safe return to work. This means sharing information, offering or accepting suitable work, and keeping the lines of communication open.

** Duty to Maintain Employment:** If there is 20+ employees, and you’ve been employed for more than a year, the employer is required to offer your pre-injury job back, or another suitable job, and accommodate you unless it causes undue hardship.

**FINAL THOUGHTS:**   
 Returning to work after an injury does not have to be all or nothing. Our goal is to support each other in staying connected, rebuilding capacity, and preventing further injury. If you’re unsure of your responsibilities or the process, just ask – your supervisor, first aid attendants, and the RTW Coordinator are here to help.

Participant Handout

### For more information on this topic or if you have questions, contact: