



Occupational Health and Safety

The health and welfare of all employees in the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat will remain an ongoing priority.

To that end we are committed to the provision of a workplace that is safe and without risks to health and safety, and to the prevention of workplace injuries or illness.

It is recognised however that injuries may occur. In such an event we are committed to the philosophy and practice of Occupational Rehabilitation. The Diocese believes that providing a safe, early return to meaningful and productive work is in the best interest of all employees.

Consequently, it encourages full and active participation from all levels of management and staff in creating a supportive environment conducive to the rehabilitation process and, the speedy return of colleagues to the workplace.

To achieve this, we have the following objectives:

1. A return to work should be a normal expectation of all employees following a work related injury. The intention is to return the injured employee to work as soon as possible.
2. All employees are encouraged to report all work related illnesses and injuries immediately.
3. Occupational Rehabilitation will commence immediately and be carried out in the appropriate manner with the involvement of all parties.
4. Each employee's occupational rehabilitation program will be developed individually, and on a confidential basis, with the employee concerned.

We have appointed (insert name) as our Return to Work Coordinator.

POLICY GUIDELINES

Employer Commitments:

- Prevention of occupational injury and illness by providing safe and healthy working environments for all employees.
- To ensure early reporting and early intervention at the workplace to enable staff to stay at work, if appropriate.
- To ensure that remaining at or returning to work as soon as possible after an injury is a normal expectation and practice.
- To assist employees to return to suitable duties/employment where possible.
- To consult with employees and representatives to ensure that the occupational rehabilitation of any injured employee is effective.
- To ensure that occupational rehabilitation is provided for injured employees as soon as possible, especially for those injured employees that are expected to be off work for more than a short period of time.

Our commitment also includes informing employees of their rights under the Accident Compensation Act, notably:

- Participation in rehabilitation and a return to work program is voluntary but non participation may remove the right of receipt of weekly and/or medical benefits.
- Participation in occupational rehabilitation will not of itself, prejudice or disadvantage an employee in either job security or promotion.

- No termination of employment within 12 months of an injury solely or principally because of that injury unless that injury means the employee is unfit to return to the workplace.

Employee Commitments:

- Taking reasonable care in the performance of designated duties and other workplace activities so as to prevent work related injuries to themselves and others.
- Reporting to their employer without delay any injury/illness or incident, which may be work related or which affects their ability to perform their work.
- Cooperating with the Parish/Diocesan authority to enable it to meet its rehabilitation obligations.
- Cooperating with the Parish/Diocesan authority to enable it to meet its rehabilitation of a fellow employee.
- Submitting promptly all relevant accident/incident reports, claim forms, medical certificates and reports, together with leave applications for work absences.
- Liaising with the Parish/Diocesan Return to Work Coordinator in relation to a rehabilitation program.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

1. CONSULTATION WITH EMPLOYERS

Occupational Rehabilitation and Risk Management is a cooperative and consultative process between the employer and the employees. Such consultation and the commitments outlined above should ensure that the occupational rehabilitation of an injured employee will be effective. All employees will be regularly informed of their rights and responsibilities and the Parish/Dioceses current policy on Occupational Rehabilitation and Risk Management.

2. WORKCOVER AUTHORISED INSURER

The Workcover Insurer for the Parish/Catholic Diocese of Ballarat is GIO.

3. RETURN TO WORK COORDINATOR

(Insert Name) has been appointed as the Return to Work Coordinator for the Parish/Catholic Diocese of Ballarat.

The role of the Coordinator includes the following:

- assist injured employees to remain at work wherever practicable or return to suitable work as soon as possible after injury.
- ensure that a return to work plan is established for each employee who has an injury that involves 20 or more days of total incapacity for work.
- liaise with any parties involved in the treatment or occupational rehabilitation of injured employees, or involved with the workplace to assist an injured employee to remain at or return to suitable work after injury.
- ensure the confidentiality of personal information made available while coordinating return to work activities, organising occupational rehabilitation services or in any other activity related to the management of an injured employee's claim.
- monitor the progress of the return to suitable work of any employee following injury and of any occupational rehabilitation services provided under a return to work plan.
- ensure that, where appropriate, an injured employee is referred to an approved occupational rehabilitation provider for assistance to return to suitable work.

4. MEDICAL SERVICES PROVIDER

The preferred medical provider for the Parish/Catholic Diocese of Ballarat will depend upon the nature of the injury, location and availability of medical services.

An injured employee may choose to see their own doctor and this choice is respected.

5. OCCUPATIONAL REHABILITATION PROVIDER

The employee may be referred to an Occupational Rehabilitation Provider when external assistance with return to work planning is considered to be reasonably necessary.

The preferred occupational rehabilitation provider of the Parish/Catholic Diocese of Ballarat will depend upon the nature of the injury and the location of the diocesan agency. The Coordinator will ensure that the occupational rehabilitation provider is experienced in occupational medicine and injuries, and is familiar with the workplace. Occupational Rehabilitation Providers offer a wide range of services and have expertise in workplace rehabilitation. They will assess and plan each person's rehabilitation individually, and ensure the employee's confidentiality.

6. REPORTING OF INJURIES

* All injuries should be reported to the Parish Priest/Leader or the employer's Occupational Health and Safety representatives as soon as possible.

* Injuries must be entered in the Register of Injuries book located

7. TREATMENT

If treatment is required, an injured employee will be referred to a medical services provider. An injured employee may choose to see their own doctor and this choice is respected.

8. RETURN TO WORK PLAN

A return to work plan is a statement of the support and employment opportunities that will be available to assist an employee to return to work following injury. It must be prepared for each injured employee within 10 calendar days of a claim reaching 20 days of total incapacity. However, the likelihood that an injured employee is returned successfully to work will increase if a return to work plan is developed earlier than this, preferably as soon as an injury occurs.

The Parish Priest/Return to Work Coordinator should therefore ensure that a return to work plan is prepared as soon as possible after an injury if it is likely that the employee will be incapacitated for 20 or more days. The employee's medical certificate should indicate the expected time an employee will be unable to work following injury. Where this time is expected to be greater than 20 days, a return to work plan should be established immediately.

9. SUITABLE DUTIES

Suitable duties will be made available to all injured or ill employees as far as is practicable, and within the medical guidelines provided.

If the injured employee is unable to return to his/her previous duties for the present time, the Parish Priest/Return to Work Coordinator will consult with the Medical Service Provider, the Employee, the Rehabilitation Provider and, should the employee choose, a personal advocate, on the question of suitable alternative duties. Recommendations will be sought regarding the nature of suitable alternative duties, the number of hours to be worked, the appropriate salary and conditions, and the anticipated period of employment of such duties.

However, the practicality of suitable duties will have to take into consideration issues such as a duty of care to clients and a responsibility to other staff. When the employee is declared fit to return to work, his/her entitlement to a position of the same equivalent office will be recognised.

10. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Parish/Ballarat Diocese in cooperation with the Occupational Health and Safety Representatives will endeavour to provide advice aimed at minimising the incidence of injury. It is the responsibility of the employer, in conjunction with the designated Occupational Health and Safety Representatives, to identify potential risk areas within their respective areas of responsibility and seek advice and assistance with the development of appropriate training programs and/or workplace changes.

The employer will advise the Occupational Health and Safety Representatives when an injury occurs and the representative in conjunction with the Return to Work Coordinator will ensure that steps are taken to reduce the risk of subsequent injury of that kind. However, confidentiality for the injured employee will be maintained at all times.

11. DISPUTES

Every endeavour should be made to solve any dispute in relation to a rehabilitation program by discussion between the parties to the rehabilitation process. If there is disagreement between the parties about the rehabilitation needs of an incapacitated employee the matter should be referred to the authorised insurer. If the matter remains in dispute, the Victoria WorkCover Authority conciliation process should be used.

12. CONCLUSION

This Occupational Rehabilitation Policy and Risk Management Program and all of its contents will come into effect on

The policy and procedures of this Program will be reviewed periodically.

13. COMMITMENT

This program represents the commitment of all in the Parish/Catholic Diocese of Ballarat to workplace occupational rehabilitation/risk management and a return to work following a work related injury. As representatives of its development and our mutual commitment, this ongoing program is endorsed by:

Signed:

Staff representatives:

Employer representative: