



Transport  
Accident  
Commission

# Returning to work

TAC information for  
new employers



# About us

The TAC is a Victorian Government-owned organisation whose role is to pay for treatment and support services for people injured in transport accidents. It is also involved in promoting road safety in Victoria and improving the state's trauma system.

A key role of the TAC is to work with injured clients, employers and treaters to help the injured person return to work.



1300 654 329



[www.tac.vic.gov.au](http://www.tac.vic.gov.au)

## Sam's story

**Before his accident Sam was a highly active worker, employed as a full time commercial plumber.**

Sam was injured in a motorbike accident and sustained multiple injuries that left him unable to return to work to perform the physical duties associated with plumbing. Sam let the TAC know that he couldn't return to his job but would like to look at some alternatives.

Following a period of rehabilitation, Sam was cleared by his doctor to look at returning to suitable employment. The TAC referred Sam to a return to work specialist who conducted a vocational assessment and completed a vocational plan to assist him to return to work. The plan helped Sam search for employment in the plumbing and building industry in roles which involved less physically demanding duties. With help from his return to work specialist, Sam found a job selling plumbing supplies for a large retail outlet. The return to work specialist discussed a return to work program with the new employer and also talked about the different employer incentives such as a work trial, WorkCover insurance and wage subsidies that the TAC could offer.

Together with Sam and his new employer, the return to work specialist conducted a worksite assessment and a return to work plan was devised starting with a trial

phase to monitor Sam's initial return to work. As part of the trial phase, the TAC reimbursed the employer 100% of Sam's wages and paid WorkCover insurance as part of the employer incentive package.

After the four week trial phase, Sam's employer was so impressed with his performance that he decided to employ him on a full-time basis. As Sam had not yet completed training with the in house systems necessary to complete all his new duties, the TAC continued to pay 100% subsidies to the employer for a further two weeks until Sam had received further training.

An ongoing return to work plan was created to assist Sam to increase his productivity and working hours. Throughout the plan, the employer received a graded wage subsidy based on Sam's productivity, along with WorkCover insurance and the assistance of the return to work specialist provider.

By working together, Sam's return to work plan is on track. Sam is happy he is back in the workforce and the employer is happy to have a motivated staff member with great knowledge to provide the best service for their customers.



# Working together

There are many people involved in supporting a person to recover and return to work after an injury. Working together, we can support a return to productive employment following a transport accident.

## The role of the TAC client

Work is considered a valued life role and returning to work forms a key part of a person's recovery after a transport accident. The earlier a person can begin the return to work process, the more successful it is likely to be.

Our clients are encouraged to actively participate in the return to work process. They will work with you, the employer, the TAC and their return to work specialist (if one is required) to ensure a safe and sustainable return to work.

## The TAC's role in helping injured clients return to work

In some instances a person who is injured after an accident is unable to return to their pre-accident employer and/or their pre-accident role.

Where the pre-accident role is not suitable and the pre-accident employer does not have any other roles to offer, the TAC can assist an injured person to find new employment.

As part of the return to work process, the TAC can provide support to both the injured person and new employers to facilitate a successful return to work.

## The role of the return to work specialist

The TAC engages external Vocational Rehabilitation Providers who employ qualified return to work specialists. A return to work specialist will work with you, your new employee and the TAC coordinator to plan a return to work program that meets your needs and the needs of your employee.

The return to work specialist may:

- conduct a worksite assessment to determine a working environment and duties appropriate for you and your employee
- assess and recommend any necessary workplace modifications or equipment
- liaise with your new employee's health care professional(s) to ensure hours and duties are appropriate
- work with your occupational health and safety manager (if applicable)
- facilitate the development of a return to work program and plan and monitor your employee's progress
- be the key contact in relation to the return to work program

## Your role

You provide the essential ingredient in the return to work process, the job!

This may be in the form of one or more of the following:

- a full time employment opportunity
- a part time employment opportunity
- a casual employment opportunity

- a work trial opportunity: a short term trial role that helps build work readiness

The TAC and the return to work specialist will discuss with you what benefits and supports are available if you are considering supporting a TAC client in their return to work. These supports will vary according to both the prospective employees' needs and your needs as an employer.

# TAC Support for Employers

A range of supports and services are available to help you to facilitate a successful return to work for your employee.


## Employer Incentive Package

The TAC may be able to offer you the following supports:

- Work trial phase
- Wage subsidies
- WorkCover insurance premium protection
- A one off payment to assist with administrative costs
- Workplace modifications and/or equipment

The package is designed to ensure your new employee can return to work as safely and productively as possible as well as minimising any potential financial impact on you and your business.

To access the TAC Employer Incentive Package, your employee must have an accepted TAC claim and in most cases a TAC referral to an authorised return to work specialist.

 **Please contact us on 1300 654 329 to discuss the Employer incentive package further with a TAC coordinator**

## The trial phase

The return to work specialist may recommend a trial phase as part of the return to work program to support your new employees' transition back to work.

The trial phase is normally up to 4 weeks in duration and is designed to:

- allow you as the employer to view your new employee at work and to be confident in their skills, work ethic and capacity to undertake the job.
- help a person build work readiness for their new role within the workplace
- allow the return to work specialist to fine tune their recommendations, if necessary, before a graded return to work commences

During the trial phase the TAC will reimburse you 100% for the hours the TAC client works.

The number of hours they work depends on a number of factors, including: their capacity, the worksite assessment conducted by the return to work specialist and your business needs.

The return to work specialist can use the results of the trial phase to plan the remainder of the return to work program with you and your employee.

## Short term work trial

In some circumstances you may not have any permanent work available, but may be able to offer a TAC client the opportunity to do a short term work trial (eg. to cover annual leave or sick leave). This would provide a TAC client with an opportunity to build skills and experience in a workplace.

During a short term work trial the TAC will reimburse you an agreed wage subsidy. The return to work specialist supervises the program and the TAC client gains invaluable experience and potentially a current reference.

The work trial can be beneficial to you as an employer. You can:

- benefit from the services of a suitably qualified worker
- develop skills in a potential future employee should longer term employment become available
- receive wage subsidies from the TAC
- receive WorkCover insurance premium protection during the trial

## Graded wage subsidy

The graded wage subsidy is designed to support you while your new employee becomes confident and familiar in their new workplace and reaches their full productivity.

Productivity is identified by a return to work specialist in collaboration with you and your employee as part of a return to work plan.



The graded wage subsidy forms part of an ongoing return to work plan. If it is required, the productivity of the employee is established and the wage subsidy paid to the employer is based on the productivity while at work.

For example, if the employee is 70% productive in his/her required duties, the TAC will reimburse the employer 30% of the wage for the hours worked. The wage subsidy decreases as the employees' productivity increases.

### WorkCover insurance premium protection

The WorkCover insurance incentive protects your WorkCover premium if your employee is injured or re-injured during a TAC return to work program.

This means that, as an employer, your WorkCover premium is not affected in the unlikely event of a workplace injury during a return to work program.

In addition, the TAC will reimburse the WorkCover excess incurred as a result of that WorkCover claim.

Safety is essential in the workplace. This is why a return to work specialist and other health practitioners where required can support you by making recommendations for safe and suitable duties that your new employee can do in the workplace.

During the return to work program you will be responsible for the usual components of the employment relationship. These include supervision, performance management, superannuation, industrial relations, human resources, standard equipment required for the role and all other WorkCover obligations.

This incentive can be provided alone or together with the trial phase or graded wage subsidy.

Some exclusions apply to accessing the WorkCover insurance premium protection. These include:

- interstate employers (that is, outside Victoria)
- employers who self-insure for WorkCover
- employers covered by ComCare
- where a WorkCover claim has not been accepted by the TAC's WorkCover agent



**You can contact us on 1300 654 329 to see if your business is eligible for WorkCover insurance.**

### One off payment

Employers may be eligible for a one off payment of up to \$1000, to assist with the administrative costs of supporting a TAC client to return to work such as recruitment and training.

It is best to discuss your eligibility for this payment with a TAC coordinator or the return to work specialist.

### Equipment and/or modifications

The TAC can consider paying the cost of reasonable workplace modifications that will assist with an employee's return to work. The TAC can arrange for a return to work specialist to conduct a worksite assessment and make recommendations to the TAC for modifying your workplace and/or the provision of equipment that will enable your new employee to work safely.

# What to expect in the return to work process

## The following steps are a guide to what you can expect BEFORE a TAC client begins work:

The return to work specialist will conduct a work-site assessment. During this assessment, your new employees' productivity will be assessed. If a wage subsidy is needed, the initial wage subsidy will be agreed upon at this stage.

The return to work specialist will then provide a report cleared by a medical practitioner to all parties, confirming duties, work hours, wage subsidies and any other recommendations (eg equipment needs)

The TAC will confirm in writing the details of the return to work plan, WorkCover insurance and subsidy payments.

## The following steps are a guide to what you can expect AFTER the TAC client begins work:

The client will start work as per the return to work plan

During the return to work plan you should pay your new employee only for the hours they work

In the case of wage subsidies, either you or your new employee should send or email payslips to the TAC. This will ensure you are reimbursed the agreed wage subsidy (for hours worked) and help us calculate any partial income benefit to be paid to the client

The return to work specialist will conduct regular reviews throughout the return to work plan and will provide regular progress reports to all parties detailing any changes in productivity, duties and hours to be worked.

There is no set timeframe for a return to work program, however it will normally run for a minimum of 12 weeks and the return to work specialist will finalise the program once the return to work goals are achieved and sustained.



# Frequently asked questions

## Can I expect my new employee to be fully fit?

In most circumstances, a person is fully fit for the duties required of them. If your new employee does have any restrictions, you will be made aware of these, however they would normally not impact on what is required of them in the role.

Depending on the length of time out of the workforce due to injury, the client may require a graded return to work. So, although they are cleared as fully fit to undertake the required duties, it may be recommended that they increase their work hours and/or work demands over a number of weeks.

## I'm worried that if I employ someone who isn't fully fit, my business may suffer due to lost productivity. What type of assistance is available?

As part of the Employer Incentive Package, the TAC can consider paying a wage subsidy to compensate your business while you support your new employee in their return to work. These subsidies will be developed with the help of a return to work specialist and will be agreed upon by all parties before any return to work program commences, so you know exactly what to expect.

## What happens if the worker injures themselves during their new employment?

Contact the TAC immediately to discuss the injury and the next steps.

Depending on the injury, the return to work program can be modified or suspended for a period, and/or a WorkCover claim form can be lodged. As an employer, you are given premium protection in the event of an accepted WorkCover claim during a TAC return to work program, regardless of the nature of the injury. In addition, the TAC will reimburse the WorkCover excess incurred as a result of that claim.

Where a WorkCover claim is lodged, the TAC's insurer will assess the claim as per the normal processes.

The TAC will work with you and your employee to ensure they have a safe and productive return to work

## Who will pay for sick leave if my employee has to have time off for treatment of their accident injuries?

It is expected that your new employee arrange any medical appointments outside of work time.

However if your new employee has to have time off work due to their accident injuries, they need to advise the TAC of this via a certificate of capacity, or a medical report from their treating practitioner.

If approved, the TAC can organise a reimbursement to you for the sick leave taken or pay the TAC client directly for the time they require off work.

## How long will it take to receive the wage subsidies? Who can I contact for support?

When the return to work program is established, you will be provided with an email address or fax number where payslips must be sent.

Generally, payments will be received in your bank account within two business days, once the TAC income officer has received all the necessary paper work and has processed the payment.



**If you have questions that you need answered in regards to payments, you should call the TAC general enquires department on 1300 654 329.**

## How long will the return to work specialist be involved in my TAC client's return to work?

The return to work specialist will monitor your new employee for a minimum of 12 weeks once their return to work goal has been achieved. In some instances, a new employee may need support for a longer period. This can be negotiated between the return to work specialist, the TAC and any other relevant party involved in the return to work program (eg. GP, occupational therapist).

If your new employee requires further vocational assistance after the return to work specialist has ceased services it is important that contact is made with the person's TAC coordinator. The coordinator can talk to you about available options to assist your employee in maintaining their employment.

## Contact us

8.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday



**1300 654 329** (local call)

**1800 332 556** (toll-free outside the Melbourne metropolitan area)



### Address

60 Brougham Street, Geelong VIC 3220



### Mailing address

TAC, GPO Box 2751 Melbourne VIC 3001



**[www.tac.vic.gov.au](http://www.tac.vic.gov.au)**

©Copyright Transport Accident Commission, 2017

For information about the TAC in your own language, call one of the numbers listed here:

العربية

1300 138 639

Ελληνικά

1300 138 642

廣東話

1300 138 640

Türkçe

1300 139 073

Polski

1300 139 072

Hrvatski

1300 138 641

Tiếng Việt

1300 139 074

English

1300 139 076

Italiano

1300 138 643

All other languages

1300 139 075

普通话

1300 139 071

