

## 12 STEPS FOR PROACTIVELY MANAGING WORKERS' COMPENSATION

### *Before any injury occurs:*

1. Implement a consistent facility return to work policy with modified duty for occupational injuries in line with that for non-occupational injuries. Ensure policy is aligned with other company benefits such as STD, LTD and FMLA.
2. **Identify a list of modified duty positions available for quick placement as transitional jobs and to facilitate prompt return to work.** Job descriptions should be reviewed by a vocational expert to identify light, medium and heavy work categories for transitional duty and permanent restricted duty.
3. **Establish a process of communication with the WC Administrator, local health care providers and emergency rooms.** Invite the providers to the facility to meet management, discuss expectation and concerns and view the facility to better understand the work environment so they can make informed decisions regarding work restrictions.
4. Include WC training as part of the basic safety training for all employees. **Train employees and supervisors in the facility WC procedures so that the process is de-mystified.** Emphasize the requirement and necessity of early reporting and review employee rights and responsibilities.

### *When an employee is injured the supervisor should:*

5. **Obtain prompt medical treatment for the employee.** There should be clear instructions available as to which physicians or medical facilities should provide treatment.
6. **Ensure prompt and complete reporting of all injuries to the Claim Center.** The sooner the WC Administrator knows about the incident, the sooner the claims process and follow-up can be initiated. Early reporting of claims is one of the most effective strategies for controlling claims cost and is the basis for requiring employees to promptly report any workplace injury. Maintain statistics on late reporting.

7. Investigate the incident and determine the causes. **Identify the underlying causes of the accident and develop an action plan to ensure they are corrected.** Send a copy of the investigation to the WC Administrator. Clearly identify areas requiring further investigation.
8. Follow-up with the injured employee. Consider early use of nurse case managers in any restricted or lost work case. **Maintain on-going open and honest communication with the employee concerning recovery and progress.** Employee uncertainty is one of the leading causes of attorney representation.
9. **Maintain clear and frequent communications with the WC Administrator** including frequent scheduled meetings for case management review at established key points in a case, written individual case management plans and clear levels of payment authorization.
10. **Return employee to work as quickly as possible.** Early return to work reduces claim cost. Provide the WC Administrator with accurate job descriptions so that the health care provider can accurately assess the impact of any potential work restrictions. Consider transitional duty assignments. While an injured employee may not be able to return to their original position immediately, they may be able to perform some tasks with restrictions.
11. Assist injured employee until recovery is complete. **The goal is the safe and speedy recovery and return to productive work of every injured employee.**
12. Address work performance and disciplinary issues at the proper time through existing HR procedures. Decisions about discipline should be made outside of the WC process so as not to impede the process of claims management and to avoid allegations of retaliation.