

HUM-001-005

Strathcona County
Municipal Policy Handbook

Disability Management and Early Return to Work Program

Date of Approval by Council: 11/21/00**Resolution No.:** 709/2000**Lead Role:** Chief Commissioner**Last Review Date:** January 16, 2015**Next Review Date:** 01/2018**Administrative Responsibility:** Human Resources

Policy Statement

Strathcona County is committed to disability prevention, support and assisting employees returning to work as soon as possible following an occupational or non-occupational injury or illness.

Principles of the Disability Management Program include:

- Rehabilitation as the cornerstone of effective health and disability management and includes early intervention and active participation by key stakeholders
- Communication as the key to the successful management of a disability
- A team approach to effectively co-ordinate resources

Definitions

Disability prevention, support and assistance are active processes of minimizing the impact of disability on the individual and enhancing the employee's capacity to participate competitively in the work environment by:

1. Primary disability prevention: actions aimed at preventing, minimizing, reducing or delaying illness, accidents and disability.
2. Secondary disability prevention: actions aimed at reducing the amount of time off work after illness or injury and at preventing chronic problems.
3. Tertiary disability prevention: actions aimed to assist with chronic problems after illness/injury and maintain an appropriate employment situation.
4. Transitional duty: promotes early intervention and focuses on the functional capacity of the employee while facilitating employee placement into the workplace following an illness or injury.

Guidelines

Strathcona County will achieve effective disability management by:

1. Assisting employees to maintain dignity and self respect during recovery from a disabling injury or illness.
2. Ensuring good communication between all parties while respecting the need to protect confidential information.

3. Enhancing the well being of affected employees by efforts to reduce stresses associated with adjusting to disability and reintegration into the workplace.
4. Facilitating early intervention and expeditious return to work to minimize the economic and emotional impact on the employee.
5. Developing a comprehensive database to enhance and monitor the effectiveness of primary, secondary and tertiary disability prevention and management initiatives undertaken to prevent future injury and illness.
6. Facilitating, where possible, modified job options and alternatives for employees to maximize the capacity to work.

Procedures

1. Managers and their supervisory staff facilitate the employee's return to work by monitoring, co-ordinating, communicating and reasonably accommodating employees in a stay at work and/or return to work program.
2. Employees who are unable to perform their regular duties because of illness or injury (work or non-work related) are expected to participate actively in modified/alternate work and rehabilitation planning (when appropriate).
3. The Employee and Family Assistance Program Coordinator, the Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator and the Benefits Specialist and Human Resources Coordinators will assist departments by:
 - Developing an integrated approach to develop primary, secondary and tertiary prevention and management interventions.
 - Provide support and direction for the disability management program
 - Monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of interventions
1. Occupational Health and Safety provides case co-ordination services for employees who are unable to perform their regular duties because of illness or injury (work or non-work related) by advising/consulting with departments on return to work options. Case coordination may include facilitating referrals to community agencies, with the employees written consent, for diagnosis and treatment. Employees are expected to cooperate and participate in the evaluation of their medical restrictions and work related requirements.
2. Human Resources Coordinators act as a resource to the manager, employee and Occupational Health and Safety personnel for the coordination of return to work placements and provide consultation services on labour relations issues.
3. Human Resources Benefits personnel act as a resource to the line manager, employee, Occupational Health and Safety and where applicable, rehabilitation consultants regarding the administration of benefit plans including sick time, WCB and Long Term Disability.
4. Employee and Family Assistance provides support to both the line manager and employee to facilitate the employee's early return to work.