

Funding graduated return to work programs for WorkCover claims

This fact sheet provides information about the department's processes and funding options to be used for WorkCover graduated return to work programs.

What is a graduated return to work program?

A graduated return to work program is used when an employee has been ill or injured and, as a result, is unable to return to normal hours of work. However, where they are able to return to work on modified hours, a return to work plan is developed in consultation with the employee, supervisor and treating medical practitioner.

Types of graduated return to work programs

Fully funded

A fully funded return to work program is where WorkCover pays the full wage of an employee regardless of how many hours they work. These types of programs do not require any rehabilitation over allocation funding.

Partially funded

A partially funded return to work program is where the department pays for the hours an employee works, and WorkCover pays for the hours not worked. If the employee has returned to work as a supernumerary (additional to the staffing allocation) then a 'rehabilitation additional allocation' should be used to fund the hours the employee is working.

Which program should be used?

WorkCover premiums are calculated using the experience based rating (EBR) system. Under this system the higher the claims costs, the higher the premium payable. To contribute to a reduction in our premium, **partially funded suitable duties programs** should be used.

Processing partially funded return to work programs

The steps to follow when processing a partially funded return to work program are:

1. A copy of the return to work plan should be forwarded to the Regional Claims Officer and WorkCover.
2. If necessary, a 'rehabilitation additional allocation' request should be made to Regional Office.
3. The Claims Officer enters leave onto TSS as per the return to work plan (i.e. hours of leave for each day of the plan). If the employee has been on approved WorkCover leave for less than 26 weeks, leave is entered as special leave with pay (with a reason of WorkCover). If greater than 26 weeks the leave is entered as special leave no pay (with a reason of WorkCover), and WorkCover pay employees directly.
4. On a weekly basis, RTW timesheets should be forwarded to the Regional Claims Officer.
5. The Claims Officer will make the necessary adjustments to leave in the payroll system.
6. WorkCover is notified by the Claims Officer of any differences between the return to work plan and the actual hours worked to ensure correct reimbursement of wages.

Note: *Employees who have been absent from work on WorkCover claims for less than 26 weeks are generally paid directly by the department.*

Employees who have been absent for greater than 26 weeks are usually paid directly by WorkCover.

Most cleaners will continue to be paid wages directly by the department for the full period of their WorkCover claim.