

# The importance and benefits of *Return-to-Work*

(temporary light duty)

Most workplace injuries are minor and do not cause the injured employee to miss work. However, it is common for a workplace injury to temporarily cause an employee to be unable to perform their regular work duties. When that happens, the best thing an employer can do is review and understand the work restrictions in order to identify tasks the injured employee can perform while the restrictions are in place (i.e., “light duty”).



## Reduces turnover

The employee/employer relationship remains intact because the injured employee continues to come to work. Light duty also helps injured workers maintain relationships with co-workers.



## Accelerates recovery

Research shows that light duty allows injured employees to maintain their routines, potentially speeding up recovery and reducing the likelihood of long-term disability.



## Relief for your team

When recovery duration is shortened, employers and their co-workers also benefit. Co-workers who are required to pick up the slack during recovery will be relieved sooner rather than later. Employers will avoid having to hire a new, inexperienced, temporary replacement.



## Financial benefits to both worker and employer

The injured employee will also continue to earn the same wage, avoiding the 25 – 40% decrease they would experience if on time-loss through the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I). This benefits the employer by preventing L&I from paying time-loss benefits, which would have a significant negative impact on the employer’s future premiums and Retrospective Rating program refund.



## Light duty reimbursement benefits

Washington State Fund employers who offer light duty to an injured employee may be eligible for reimbursement of 50% of the wages paid to an employee on light duty (for up to 66 workdays or \$10,000 reimbursed, whichever occurs first) through L&I’s Stay-at-Work (SAW) reimbursement program Stay at Work.



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