

# Rehabilitation Policy

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## Policy Statement

Cycling Southland is committed to initiating vocational rehabilitation programmes whenever appropriate for work-related personal injury (all staff), for non-work personal injury (excludes contracted staff who fall outside the definition of 'employee') and for personal illness (sick leave). The aim is to assist optimum recovery, early return to work, and resumption of normal lifestyle without undue delay. The benefits of rehabilitation are greatest when the process is begun as soon as possible.

Staff are expected to participate fully in their own rehabilitation programme, which will be established through a consultative approach. The injured or ill person is entitled to support, advice, and representation from their nominated representative. Medical information will be obtained with formal consent from the staff member and will be treated confidentially.

## Scope

This policy applies to all employees.

## Purpose

Through planned rehabilitation, to manage proactively the early return of staff members to as normal a life as possible, having regard to the consequences of the personal injury or illness.

## Responsibilities

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### The General Manager is responsible for:

- Identifying suitable alternative duties, where possible, to enable an early return to work for the staff member.
- Confirming that a rehabilitation plan is established, if appropriate, following a lost time accident.
- Monitoring the staff member's progress towards recovery and the suitability of the alternative duties and/or rehabilitation programme.
- Taking steps to see that appropriate levels of confidentiality are maintained consistent with the principles of the Privacy Act 1993.
- Reviewing Health and Safety Management after a critical event, or if there is a change in work procedures, or Health and Safety Policy.
- Acting as the Health and Safety Representative and person responsible for liaison with ACC on behalf of your organisation.
- Ensuring that relevant support systems are in place if an injury or illness requires alterations to the employees workspace, requires opportunities to administer relevant medication or therapeutic exercises, or to avoid aggravation and relapse of an accident or illness.

### Staff members are responsible for:

- Participating in an appropriate rehabilitation programme, including a return to work programme, which requires alternative duties or partial hours.
- Providing ongoing medical certificates to the General Manager.

## Procedures

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### **Early return to work for full-time and part-time employees**

A staff member who has experienced a personal injury or illness and who has taken time off to recover will be supported in a return to work as early as possible and in accordance with medical advice. This involves a partnership between the staff member and the General Manager, medical treatment providers, and others, as appropriate, in the circumstances. At any stage the staff member can choose to be accompanied by a representative or support person. An early return to work may involve a modification of the person's working environment, alternative duties for a temporary period, and/or changes to the normal hours of work.

### **Medical information**

The staff member must give a copy of their completed ACC forms or medical certificate from the treatment provider (this must be a registered medical practitioner or nurse practitioner if lost time is involved), to the General Manager.

The medical certificate will state the staff member's capacity or incapacity for work and specify a date for review (second visit) by the treatment provider. Selected or restricted activities may also be specified for a certain period of time. If the injured or ill person is off work for more than seven consecutive days, they must provide a medical certificate confirming they are 'fit for work' to the Finance Manager.

### **Capacity to work and the provision of alternative duties**

The provision of suitable alternative duties is an essential part of rehabilitation. Alternative duties are aimed at providing appropriate and productive work while a staff member rehabilitates to his/her former role. This is a proactive approach to enable a staff member to return to work as quickly as possible and maximise the chances of full recovery.

The General Manager will try to identify suitable alternative duties after considering:

- The nature and severity of the injury or illness.
- The medical information provided and the restrictions imposed by treatment providers.
- The previous work undertaken by the staff member.
- The predicted timeframe for rehabilitation (if known).

### **Regular review**

The General Manager will review the rehabilitation programme in consultation with the staff member at regular intervals (usually every two weeks) involving others as appropriate. Where uncertainty exists about the suitability of duties being performed or where the progress of a staff member is slower than anticipated, the General Manager will seek additional professional assistance as appropriate.

### **Alternative placement or permanent disablement**

Where at any point it becomes clear that a staff member will be unable or is unlikely to return to former duties as a result of work-related personal injury, Cycling Southland will explore the possibility of suitable alternatives with the employee.

When an employee's personal injury or illness is so severe as to prevent her or him returning to their former position and all available options have been fully explored, then termination of employment will be considered in accordance with the relevant employment contract.

## Definitions

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- ‘Rehabilitation’ means a process of active change and support with the goal of restoring the staff member’s health, independence, and participation to the maximum extent practicable. It comprises treatment, social rehabilitation, and vocational rehabilitation.
- ‘Rehabilitation plan’ means an individualised rehabilitation programme to facilitate the early and safe return of the staff member to the same or equivalent duties as those previously performed on a long-term basis.
- ‘Alternative duties’ are early return to work interventions. They may include alternative work or other forms of action appropriate for the staff member. These duties are a temporary modification of the employee’s work tasks. They must not aggravate the personal injury or delay healing, must be compatible with the business of the organisation, and be subject to regular review. A staff member may be fit for alternative duties from the occurrence of the personal injury or when improvement has occurred following a period of being unfit for work.
- Serious harm means:
  - Amputation of body part.
  - Burns requiring referral to a specialist, registered medical practitioner, or specialist outpatient clinic.
  - Loss of consciousness from lack of oxygen.
  - Loss of consciousness, or acute illness requiring treatment by a registered medical practitioner from: absorption, inhalation, or ingestion of any substance.
  - Any harm that causes the person harmed to be hospitalised for a period of 48 hours or more commencing within seven days of the harm's occurrence.
  - Any of the following conditions that amounts to or results in permanent loss of bodily function, or temporary severe loss of bodily function: respiratory disease, noise-induced hearing loss, neurological disease, cancer, dermatological disease, communicable disease, musculoskeletal disease, illness caused by exposure to infected material, decompression sickness, poisoning, vision impairment, chemical or hot-metal burn of eye, penetrating wound of eye, bone fracture, laceration, crushing.

## References

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- Injury Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Compensation Act 2001.
- Privacy Act 1993.
- Human Rights Act 1993.
- Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 and Amendment.