

# THE NORTHCOTT SOCIETY

## POLICY ON INJURY MANAGEMENT AND REHABILITATION

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<b>VOLUME:</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Management and Organisational Issues</b>
<b>SECTION:</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Occupational Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation</b>
<b>SUB-SECTION:</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>OH&amp;S – General</b>
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<b>BOARD APPROVAL</b>		<b>Not Required</b>

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### **Policy**

In accordance with the intention of the Workplace Injury Management and Workers' Compensation Act 1998 and the Workers Compensation Act 1987, Northcott has developed and adopted Injury Management and Rehabilitation Procedures guidelines.

The main objectives of implementing Injury Management and Rehabilitation Procedures are to:

- Ensure that Northcott manages work-related injury and disease to prevent lost time injuries.
- Ensure early notification of the injury/disease and early lodgement and processing of the claim.
- Ensure early contact with the injured worker.
- Establish a framework to assist Supervisors and Managers process work-related injury and disease.
- Ensure suitable duties are found to ensure lost time injuries are minimised.
- Co-ordinate the approach to injury management, to ensure consistency across Northcott.
- Maintain and strive for continuous improvement and "best practice."

### **Scope**

This policy and procedures apply to all staff at Northcott.

## **Definitions**

### **Injured Employee**

An employee is any person employed on either a full time, part-time or casual basis by Northcott.

### **Lost Time**

An employee with a work related injury who has sustained lost time from work.

### **No Lost Time**

An injured employee who due to physical/psychological problems is experiencing difficulty coping with their work, but has continued working normal hours.

## **Case Team**

The Case Team comprises all relevant parties involved in the injury management and rehabilitation of the injured employee. The team aims towards achieving the injury management and rehabilitation goals as agreed with the injured employee, with each member utilising their area of expertise. The Case Team may include:

## **Insurer**

The insurer for Northcott is GIO and it provides an important role to ensure the implementation of the Injury Management Program and in the development of Injury Management Plans for injured employees.

An Injury Management Program is a co-ordinated program of treatment, rehabilitation, claims management and employment practices to achieve a timely, safe and durable return to work for an injured employee.

An Injury Management Plan is an individual plan for co-ordinating injury management activities for an individual employee. The insurer is responsible for developing the plan within three (3) days of being notified by the employer of a significant injury. GIO may ask Northcott's Return to Work Co-ordinator to assist in developing and implementing the plan.

## **Supervisor/Manager**

Management has a key role in ensuring the success of injury management and rehabilitation programs. They are responsible for actively supporting the injury management and rehabilitation process by working closely with the Nominated Treating Doctor, the injured employee, the Rehabilitation Provider and the Return to Work Co-ordinator to provide meaningful duties for the Return to Work Program. They have regular contact with the injured employee and ensure all the paperwork is completed within the time frames listed in this procedure. The Supervisor remains responsible for the injury management program and payment of any salary required during periods of re-training or suitable duties in another area.

### **Northcott's Return to Work Co-ordinator**

Nothcott's Return to Work Co-ordinator is responsible for supporting management and an injured employee by:

1. Notifying the insurer as soon as they are aware (within 48 hours) of an employee with a significant injury.
2. Assisting and supporting an injured employee and managing all aspects of compensation, injury management and rehabilitation.
3. Liaising with the insurer to develop a suitable Injury Management Plan in conjunction with the injured employee, insurer and appropriate case team members.
4. Sourcing a preferred rehabilitation provider if approved by the injured employee.
5. Implementing an Injury Management Program, if considered relevant, although this is the insurer's responsibility.
6. Monitoring the progress of injury management and rehabilitation.

### **Nominated Treating Doctor**

The role of the doctor in injury management is to:

- Provide an appropriate medical certificate
- Arrange appropriate treatment
- Recommend suitable duties in consultation with the employer
- Be available to discuss the employee's Injury Management Plan with the employer, insurer and other service providers

Provide written consent on the certificate for consultation with key players

The roles of two other doctors are included in the injury management strategy – the injury management consultant and approved medical specialist.

### **Injury Management Consultant**

These are medical practitioners (generally Rehabilitation Specialists, Occupational Physicians or GPs with specific training) who are authorised and trained by Workcover in negotiation techniques. Their role is to provide advice to the insurer and the employer (and others) regarding suitability of duties offered, and assistance in facilitating effective injury management.

### **Approved Medical Specialist**

These are medical specialists recommended from the professional colleges and authorised by the Workers' Advisory Society. They provide opinions regarding ongoing liability. Their evidence will be considered "prima facie" (accepted as without dispute) and they will not be required to attend the Workers' Compensation Commission to defend their report.

### **Approved Vocational Rehabilitation Provider**

The rehabilitation provider's role is to deliver a professional rehabilitation program to the injured employee who may require ongoing assistance with their return to work. The approved rehabilitation provider should work closely with the Supervisor of the injured employee to deliver an appropriate program in a timely and cost effective manner, working closely with the injured employee, treating medical practitioner, insurer and case team.

Northcott will refer an injured employee to an approved vocational rehabilitation provider in the following circumstances:

- a. The employee's injury is psychological.
- b. The employee is expected to return to work on suitable duties for an extended period of time.
- c. An employee has been on suitable duties for two weeks and this is expected to continue.
- d. The treating doctor and/or the employee's supervisor requests a workplace assessment. This assessment may be requested even if an employee has returned to normal duties.

Northcott will review the effectiveness of their nominated rehabilitation providers on an annual basis. the following key performance indicators will be considered during the review:

- a. Response times between referral date and initial contact.
- b. Response times between initial contact and workplace assessment.
- c. Claims costs.
- d. Return to work rates.

### **Rehabilitation Program**

After undertaking an initial assessment, the rehabilitation provider will present a rehabilitation program, which may include:

- a. Physical / psychological conditioning  
These elements aim to identify the employee's physical / psychological limitations and work towards improving capacity. It may include suitable duties and job analysis.
- b. Functional Capacity Evaluation (FCE)  
Determines physical / psychological capacity in relation to work demands. It may include equipment or duties modification to enable the injured employee to undertake duties safely.

- c. **Work Hardening Program**  
Intensive physical / psychological program to improve areas of limitation. It may include psychological management to address emotional issues that may be impacting on the ability to return to work.
- d. **Ongoing Medical / Paramedical Management**  
This may include physiotherapy, chiropractic, medication and medical management.
- e. **Re-training**  
Re-training will only be provided on an ongoing, unlimited basis, if the injured employee is able to meet the minimum employment standards for a readily available position within a reasonable period of time.

## **EMPLOYER OBLIGATIONS**

### **What Should I do if a Staff Member is Injured at Work?**

1. Ensure first aid or appropriate medical attention is provided to the injured employee.
2. Ensure the injured employee is given a copy of this procedure and the Workcover booklet called "What Workcover means for Injured Workers" and discuss their responsibilities with them.
3. Sign the Employee Injury Report Form once completed by the injured employee. This form should be faxed to Human Resources on (02) 9890 7746 within 24 hours of the injury being reported to you. It is important to ensure the form is fully completed. Northcott is required to notify the Insurer within 48 hours of the injury being reported to you. If you believe these timeframes may not be met, you may fax a copy direct to the Insurer on 1300 652 151 as well as faxing to Human Resources.
4. Attach a copy of the Employee Injury Form to the Injury Register and maintain this in your Unit.
5. Ensure that the injured employee provides a NSW Workcover medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner, which includes a diagnosis and expected time off work. You need to ensure that the injured employee continues to provide Workcover Medical Certificates until the injured employee is certified fit for pre-injury duties. The original Workcover Medical Certificates should be forwarded to Human Resources at Head Office, 1 Fennell Street, North Parramatta 2151 (PO Box 4055, Parramatta 2124).
6. An injured employee is not required to complete Workers' Compensation Claim Forms for their illness/injury, during the first 12 weeks from the date of injury. This is known as the Provisional Liability Period.

- a. Provisional Liability enables an insurer to make weekly payments and pay medical expenses without admitting liability. This enables an insurer to make early payments to an injured employee without delay.
  - b. Among the major reforms to Workers' Compensation in NSW that began on 1 January 2002, is streamlined notification/claims processing (Section 267 Workplace Injury Management and Workers' Compensation Act 1998).
  - c. These provisions allow insurance companies to begin weekly compensation payments and injury management within seven (7) calendar days of initial injury notification, except where there is a 'reasonable excuse' for this not to occur (eg when there is insufficient medical information or if the injury is not work related).
  - d. Provisional Liability payments can continue up to a maximum of 12 weeks from the date of injury. At approximately eight (8) weeks the insurer will contact the injured employee and request completion of Workers' Compensation Claim Forms. If the injured employee wishes to complete claim forms, you should ensure the forms are fully completed, signed and forwarded to Human Resources.
7. Conduct an accident Investigation. Refer to the Accident/Incident Investigation Procedures.

### **Employer Obligations to Injury Management**

If the injured employee requires suitable duties or is off work for more than seven (7) working days, you should:

1. Participate and cooperate in the establishment of a Return to Work Plan and comply with the obligations imposed on the employer in the Return to Work Plan.
2. Maintain contact with the injured employee at all stages, once an injury at work has occurred.
3. Provide suitable duties for the injured employee, who is able to return to work on a full-time or part-time basis. A Return to Work Plan will outline this and will be developed in consultation with you, the injured employee, the treating medical practitioner and Human Resources.
4. Determine suitable duties that are meaningful and productive in achieving a return to pre-injury duties and pre-injury hours.
5. Complete a Timesheet of the hours worked by the injured employee, who is working on reduced hours/days and record the hours to pay Workers' Compensation. This form should be faxed to Payroll on 02 9890 7746.

6. All weekly Workers' Compensation costs will be charged to your unit, as it is beneficial to both the employee and employer if the Return to Work Plan has shared ownership.
7. Should you not agree that the incident/injury is work related, or the incident/injury did not occur as the injured employee states, they are still entitled to submit a claim. You are able to dispute the claim, by completing a report outlining your concerns with the claim and forwarding this with the paperwork to Human Resources.

**Every Employer has the right to:**

1. Dispute a Workers' Compensation Claim if lodged.
2. Require the employee to participate in a Return to Work Plan.
3. Seek independent medical review of the injured employee.
4. Be involved in the Return to Work Plan.
5. Refuse a return to work for an employee injured out of the workplace until medically declared fit for normal duties and normal hours, or initiate further medical advice.
6. Be kept informed of the injured employee's medical status.
7. Cease, suspend, reduce or adjust the employee's payments under certain circumstances in accordance with the provisions in the Workers' Compensation Legislation.
8. Consult with other employees in the immediate working environment, where an injured employee is to be returned, if it affects their working conditions.

**EMPLOYEE OBLIGATIONS**

**What Should I do if I am Injured at Work?**

1. Your Supervisor should be informed as soon as possible that you are injured and seek first aid or medical attention. If your medical practitioner provides a NSW Workcover Medical Certificate which states you are off work, tell your Supervisor what the diagnosis is and how long you will be off work.
2. An Employee Injury Report Form should be completed as soon as possible. It is important that this form is fully completed and signed by your Supervisor, who will forward the form to Human Resources.

3. Should you wish to seek reimbursement or payment of medical expenses incurred, these accounts should be forwarded to the Human Resource Unit at Head Office, 1 Fennell Street, North Parramatta 2151.
4. A NSW WorkCover Medical Certificate is required until such time as you are fit for pre-injury duties. It should be noted that if this is not current, it may impact on your weekly payments.
5. If you wish to seek reimbursement for the mileage it takes you to travel to attend medical appointments, you need to complete a reimbursement form which includes the motor size of your vehicle, the kilometres travelled, the date, time and reason for travel.
6. You will need to complete an Authority Form to enable Northcott's Return to Work Co-ordinator to exchange medical information with your treating medical practitioner.
7. You are not required to complete Workers' Compensation Claim Forms for your illness/injury during the Provisional Liability period of 12 weeks from the date of injury. Should your injury/illness continue for a period of eight (8) weeks from the date of injury, the insurer will contact you with regard to lodging Workers' Compensation Claim Forms.

Provisional Liability enables an insurer to make weekly payments and pay medical expenses without admitting liability. This enables an insurer to make early payments to you without delay.

Among the major reforms to Workers' Compensation in NSW that began on 1 January 2002 is streamlined notification/claims processing (Section 267 Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998).

These provisions allow insurance companies to begin weekly compensation payments and injury management within seven (7) calendar days of initial injury notification, except where there is a 'reasonable excuse' for this not to occur (eg when there is insufficient medical information or if the injury is not work related).

### **Employee Obligations to Injury Management**

The goal of Injury Management is to achieve a timely, safe and durable return to pre-injury duties and pre-injury hours following a work related injury/illness.

You need to ensure that you:

1. Take reasonable care at work so as not to put yourself or others at unnecessary risk.
2. Advise your Supervisor within 24 hours of any injury occurring in the work place.
3. Participate and cooperate in the establishment of a Return to Work Plan.

4. Comply with your obligations under the Return to Work Plan.
5. Maintain contact with your Supervisor and the Return To Work Co-ordinator even during periods away from the workplace.
6. Nominate a treating medical practitioner who will agree to participate in the development of a Return to Work Plan.
7. Postpone any leave due to be taken, so as to minimise disruption to the return to work process. If leave is to be taken and requires travel outside NSW, the employer and insurer needs to be notified.
8. Notify the employer of a second job.
9. Make all reasonable efforts to return to work in your pre-injury duties and pre-injury hours, as soon as possible, having regard to the injury.
10. Communicate openly and honestly with Northcott on all aspects of the accident/injury/illness recovery and Return to Work Plan.
11. Complete all forms honestly and to the best of your ability.

Northcott's Return to Work Co-ordinator will make contact with you to determine your medical condition status and monitor your progress. The Return to Work Co-ordinator may also suggest the appointment of an external Return to Work Co-ordinator should difficulties be experienced in identifying suitable duties or for the purposes of assisting to improve your chances of an early, safe return to work. You may nominate an external Return To Work Co-ordinator of your choice, who is required to work with the internal Return to Work Co-ordinator, or alternatively, Northcott may nominate one for you.

Northcott's Return to Work Coordinator may also suggest the appointment of an external medical practitioner, if they believe this will improve your chances of an early, safe return to work.

**Every Injured Employee has the Right to:**

- Confidentiality regarding the details of your claim, where it does not impact on the Return to Work Plan.
- Choice of treating medical practitioner.
- Choice of Rehabilitation Provider. (Northcott has approved Rehabilitation Providers that can assist you).
- Active involvement in any negotiations or decisions which will impact on you.

- Income maintenance during the period of incapacity which is supported by Workcover Medical Certificates.
- Have the costs met associated with attending appointments with medical practitioners.
- Services and equipment which will assist your return to work.
- Assistance with appropriate interpreter services if you have English language difficulties.
- Have your employment maintained for up to six (6) months from the date you are unfit for work.

### **Grievances**

In the first instance, the case team will attempt to resolve any grievances that may arise through consultation with all members. Should the dispute not be resolved at this level, the Human Resources Manager or insurer may be contacted for further advice.

### **Review**

This procedure will be reviewed every two years in consultation with the OH&S Committee and will remain in force until amendments are made.

The return to work programme will be reviewed every two years by the Human Resources Manager. The next review date will be September 2008.

### **Injury Management Flow Chart**

Please see appendix A which outlines the injury management reporting process at Northcott. The flow chart can be posted on notice boards to inform employees how to report injuries.

**Authorised by:** .....  
**Mike Fryer**  
**Director Operations**

## RETURN TO WORK PLAN

A Return To Work Plan **must** be developed prior to the injured employee returning to work on restrictions. Each time the employee is reviewed and the restrictions and/or duties change a new plan **must** be prepared.

The responsibilities of each of the parties are:

- Injured Worker: To co-operate with the rehabilitation process and to notify the Supervisor of any problems.
- Supervisor: To ensure that the injured employee performs only the duties outlined in the RTW Plan, monitors the injured employee's ability to perform the duties, notifies the Rehabilitation Co-ordinator of problems and to facilitate the injured employee's attendance at necessary services.
- RTW Co-ordinator: To ensure all parties endorse the RTW Plan, monitor the injured employee's progress, co-ordinate services to resolve problems, change duties as required or medically endorsed.
- Nominated Treating Doctor: To manage the treatment of the injured/ill employee including participation in the Injury Management Plan. Provide medical advice and certification according to State legislation.

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|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Initial RTW Plan<br><input type="checkbox"/> Goal – Same job, same employer<br><input type="checkbox"/> Goal – Different job, same employer | <input type="checkbox"/> Progress RTW Plan<br><input type="checkbox"/> Goal – Same job, different employer<br><input type="checkbox"/> Goal – Different job, different employer |
|--|---|

1. Job Title	
2. Work Location	
3. Supervisor	
4. Claim Number	
5. Injury	
6. Suitable Duties	
7. Considerations/ Restrictions	
8. Hours/Days of work	
9. Wages (including pre- injury earnings)	
10. Commencement Date	
11. Review Date/s	
12. Length of Program	
13. Services/Treatment Required	
14. General Comments	

The following parties have agreed to the program:

Injured Employee		Date
Supervisor/Manager		Date
RTW Co-ordinator		Date
Nominated Treating Doctor		Date