Modified Work: Construction Industry



Tips for helping injured workers perform safe and suitable work during their recovery process

If an injury occurs, returning to modified or alternate work helps with the worker's ability to recover, and their physical and psychological wellbeing.

To identify suitable work, look closely at the worker's job demands and compare them to their functional abilities (the worker should have a **Functional Abilities** form completed by a health care provider). Identify the barriers that prevent the return to work and decide if there can be changes made to overcome them. If the worker is unable to do their job duties with modifications, look for alternative work that is within their abilities. Make sure the worker has the skills and training to do the tasks.

Ways to overcome barriers may include tool or equipment modifications, for example, changing the height of sawhorse, using a powered caulking gun, or pre-job planning to minimize handling and moving of materials, carts, hoists, etc.

Here are some other ideas for modified or alternate duties. They have various physical demands associated with them. Make sure to review the worker's functional limitations and restrictions to determine suitability:

Office work

 Paperwork/administrative tasks – review designs, blueprints, determine lumber and supply requirements, order supplies/ materials, answer phones, file, purge, or shred files

Carpentry type work

- Measure and cut lumber
- Install insulation
- Finishing work trims, frames, etc.
- Install finishing hardware door handles, kick plates, etc.
- Housekeeping vacuuming, sweeping, removing offcuts, etc.
- Gluing, caulking, painting, taping and mudding over nails
- Diagnosis and problem solving – identifying repairs and problem-solving solutions

- Locate numbers on joints – provide to foreman/ supervisor to ensure building accuracy
- · Levelling walls

Other types of work

- Tool maintenance sharpen tools, clean tools, replace handles, replace cords, plugs, etc.
- Pick-up and delivery of supplies
- · Inventory and sourcing materials
- Customer service tasks
- Safety inspections

These are ideas to get you thinking – you know your work sites and workers best. Identify suitable work for each case.

For more information on developing a Return to Work program, visit our website at wscc.nt.ca or wscc.nu.ca, or contact WSCC's Return to Work Specialist at 1 (800) 661-0792 or ReturnToWork@wscc.nt.ca.