

Return-to-work plans

Standard operating procedure (SOP) | OHS-SOP-003

Document type	Standard operating procedure (SOP)
Title	Return-to-work plans
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Version and status	1.0 Issued for use. Pending ASF Expert Committee ratification
Prepared by	{{roles.quality_lead.name}}, Quality lead
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Effective date	{{document.effective_date}}
Next review	{{document.review_date}} (12 months, or sooner after any incident or change)
Replaces	None (new document)
Standards and criteria supported	Standard 14 (Occupational Health), criterion 14.6
Evidence basis	E-006, E-009
Status of this document	Recommended best-practice model. A hospital may adopt, adapt or replace it with an equivalent that meets the same criteria.

At a glance: what to do

1. For a worker off work through illness or injury, a return-to-work plan is agreed with the worker (OHS-FRM-005).
2. The plan sets the duties, the hours and the review date.
3. The plan is reviewed at the review date and when the condition changes.
4. The worker and the employer each get a copy.

Stop and get help straight away if: a worker returns to work with no agreed plan after a long absence.

1. Purpose

To bring a worker back to work safely after illness or injury (14.6).

2. Scope

Applies to	Clinical and support staff in the hospital
Locations	All wards, clinics and departments of {{facility.legal_name}}
When	Whenever the activity described is carried out
Does not apply to	Activities covered by another document listed in section 15

3. Definitions and abbreviations

Term	Meaning in this SOP
Clinical lead	The doctor or nurse in charge of the area at the time

4. Background and rationale

To bring a worker back to work safely after illness or injury (14.6).

5. Responsibilities

Role	Duties in this SOP	Competence needed
Occupational physician	Agrees the plan and sets the review date	Clinician
Line manager	Puts the plan in place at work	Manager

6. Equipment, materials and resources

Item	Specification or standard	Check before use
Records and forms named in this document	Current version	Checked before use

7. Safety and infection prevention

- Stop and call for help if a patient is at immediate risk. Do not delay urgent care to complete paperwork.

8. Before you start

- Confirm the forms and equipment named in this document are available and current.

9. Procedure

Follow the steps in order. Where a step says "If", take the action for the case that applies. Do not skip a step. If a step cannot be done, use section 11 and section 12.

Step	Action	How to do it	Key point
1	Agree.	• Agree the plan with the worker on OHS-FRM-005 before the return.	Agreed before return.
2	Set the review.	• Set the review date and the conditions that trigger an earlier review.	Review date set.
3	Review.	• Review the plan on the date and when the condition changes.	Reviewed.

Decision points

- No decision points in this procedure.

10. Special situations

Situation	What to do
Out of hours	Follow the same steps. Use the on-call contact on the wall of the area.

11. Problems and escalation

- Any serious problem goes to the duty clinical lead at once and to the clinical director the same day.

12. Monitoring and compliance

What is checked	Target	How often	Who	If the target is missed
Returns to work with an agreed plan	95%	Monthly	Occupational physician	Escalate to medical director

13. Records

Record	Where it is kept	Kept for
Record named in this document	Patient record or the area file	{{facility.records_retention_years}} years

14. Training and competence

- Staff are trained in this document at induction and refreshed each year, with a recorded competency check.

15. Related documents

ID	Title	Relationship
OHS-FRM-005	Return-to-work plan	Plan

16. Evidence

ID	Source and status
E-009	Based on ILO Convention No. 161 concerning Occupational Health Services (1985) and the WHO Healthy Workplaces framework (2010).
E-006	ASF Policy Framework v1.2. Adapted.
E-009	ASF Expert Committee consensus.

EC = ASF Expert Committee consensus. Items marked EC are reviewed by the Committee each year.

17. Change history

Version	Date	What changed	Approver and signature
1.0	{{document.effective_date}}	First version	Pending Expert Committee approval