

7. What if there is a disagreement between the employer and the worker about the selective/light employment?

Ideally the employer and the worker will be able to reach an agreement on selective/light employment without the involvement of WorkSafeBC. However, if they can't, the employer and/or worker should contact WorkSafeBC at 604 231-8888 or 1 888 967-5377

8. If WorkSafeBC becomes involved, what does it consider?

- When and how the offer was made to the worker. Was there a written or verbal offer of selective/light employment?
- Is selective/light employment a longstanding practice with this employer, and should the worker have been aware of the program?
- Are the selective/light duties safe and productive?

9. If WorkSafeBC considers the refusal to be unreasonable, what happens?

If it is determined that the worker's refusal of the selective/light employment is unreasonable, the worker's entitlement to wage loss benefits may be reduced.

10. Suggestions for Employers

- Develop a variety of selective/light employment jobs or duties, in advance of any injuries
- Prepare video descriptions of selective/light employment work
- Attach a copy of the detailed description of the selective/light employment duties (job task analysis) to the selective/light employment offer and send this information to WorkSafeBC with the Form 7 (Employer's Report of Injury or Occupational Disease).
- Provide the worker and WorkSafeBC with a description of the specific duties, the physical demands of the work, and the date the work is available.
- Document and track the worker's progress during selective/light employment

Contact us for assistance

For claims inquiries, call 604 231-8888 or 1 888 967-5377 Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

For assessments inquiries, call 604 244-6181 or 1 888 922-2768

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Selective/Light Employment

For Employers



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Selective/Light Employment For Employers

1. Overview

Selective/light employment is a temporary work alternative offered to an injured worker by an employer. Generally, employers offer selective/light employment soon after the worker is injured with the intent of eventually restoring workers to their pre-injury level of employment.

Selective/light employment may involve modified duties, modified hours of work, or both. WorkSafeBC encourages employers and workers to use selective/light employment as part of return-to-work programs. The success of selective/light employment depends on the cooperation of all parties in the workplace, and arrangements may involve consultation with the worker, the employer, the attending physician, and the worker's union.

2. Benefits

Selective/light employment:

- Aids in worker recovery
- Reduces the worker's loss of income during the early stages of a temporary disability
- Reduces workplace disruption
- Reduces costs to employers

3. WorkSafeBC policy criteria

Selective/light employment must be appropriate for the injured worker and must meet the following criteria:

- The worker must be capable of performing some type of suitable employment
- The work must be safe, productive, and neither harm the worker, nor slow their recovery

- The work must be within the worker's medical restrictions, physical limitations, and abilities
- The work must be productive (token or demeaning tasks do not further a worker's rehabilitation)
- The worker must agree to the arrangement, within reasonable limits

4. Restrictions and limitations

Medical restriction

Medical restrictions refer to tasks that the worker should not perform due to a predictable risk of medical harm. (E.g. A worker with a disc herniation should not do heavy lifting as it is likely to cause the disc to herniate further).

Physical limitation

Physical limitations refer to tasks that the worker is not capable of performing due to his or her medical condition. (E.g. an injured worker employed as a mechanic may be unable to perform sustained neck extension required in his usual duties because of pain).

5. Safe and productive employment

Factors to consider when offering safe and productive selective/light employment:

- Does the worker have the skill, ability, and education to perform the work?
- Is the work within the worker's medical restrictions and physical limitations?
- Is the worker taking medication that could impact their ability to work?
- Are there safety concerns related to the worker's participation in the selective/light employment (e.g., would the worker be able to safely evacuate from the worksite in the event of an emergency)?

- Will the work contribute to the recovery of the injured worker?
- Is the work meaningful, and will it contribute to the business goals of the workplace?
- Is the work training related and, if so, is it the type of training that the employer would pay the worker to undertake at other times?
- Is the selective/light employment part of the regular work of the workplace?

6. Refusal of a selective/light employment offer

If a worker refuses an offer of selective/light employment, WorkSafeBC will determine if the refusal was reasonable. WorkSafeBC considers the following when evaluating refusals:

- Was there a lack of communication between the employer, the worker, and the physician?
- Did the worker actually refuse the offer of selective/light employment, or does the worker require additional details from the employer?
- Does the selective/light employment involve a different shift or location than the worker's usual employment? If yes, does the change affect the worker's daycare or transportation arrangements?
- Does the worker have legitimate concerns that the selective/light duties may impede their recovery?
- Has the worker had a bad experience with selective/light employment where a further injury occurred, or recovery was delayed?
- Has the worker discussed his/her concerns with their physician?