

## WHAT IS A WORKTRIAL?

A WorkTrial is a short period of work experience as part of an occupational rehabilitation program. It is a WorkCover initiative aimed at helping injured workers to maintain or regain full employment. Work Trials are only used when the employer responsible for the injury cannot provide suitable duties. In most cases, the injured worker (or "trainee") will have been terminated from their employment before a Work Trial is sought. The employer who provides the Work Trial is called the "Host Employer".

A Work Trial must be arranged and monitored by an Accredited Rehabilitation Provider and approved by WorkCover.

The **maximum** period of time for a Work Trial is 12 weeks.

### BENEFITS FOR INJURED WORKERS

*Injured workers will benefit from Work Trials by:*

- gaining practical work experience and training in a new job. This will often be complemented by formal training.
- having an opportunity to upgrade their physical fitness through selected work activities.
- demonstrating to a potential employer their ability to do the job.

### BENEFITS FOR HOST EMPLOYERS

*As a host employer you will benefit from Work Trials by:*

- being able to train a potential employee without financial outlay.
- contributing to the retraining and placement of an injured worker and so to the containment of workers compensation costs in NSW.
- helping to build a positive perception of your industry.
- some employers, especially small employers will benefit from entering into co-operative arrangements with other employers to share suitable duties and rehabilitation arrangements.



### WHAT ARE THE FINANCIAL AND INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS?

Work Trials are a rehabilitation training activity so trainees are paid compensation benefits by the insurer who is managing their claim. As the Host Employer, **you do not make any payment to the injured worker.**

Costs of travel and essential equipment are paid by WorkCover directly to the trainee.

As the trainee is not a "worker" as defined by the Workers Compensation Act 1987, he/she has no claim against your workers compensation insurance in the event of an accident.

If the trainee is involved in an accident at your workplace and suffers an aggravation or new injury as a result, WorkCover will pay workers compensation benefits to the trainee. If damage to property or other persons result, WorkCover will pay expenses associated with any claim on your insurance (eg: excess and the cost of any increases in your public liability premiums resulting from claims).

You must still fulfil your obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, notably those regarding reporting of accidents to WorkCover and provision of a safe working environment.

### WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES?

*During the Work Trial:*

- provide supervision and training to the trainee so he/she can learn the job or upgrade his/her capacity for work;
- follow the advice of the rehabilitation provider regarding the nature of the work to be carried out and any work restrictions;
- allow the rehabilitation provider ready access to the workplace for the purpose of monitoring the training;
- provide feedback to the trainee and rehabilitation provider on the trainee's performance;
- and*
- contact the rehabilitation provider if problems arise, before terminating the training agreement.

The Rehabilitation Provider will notify the relevant Union (if represented at your workplace) to obtain agreement and co-operation with the Work Trial.

*After the Work Trial*

Where the trainee is looking for work, it is an expectation that you will consider him/her for any vacancies where he/she meets the requirements of the job.

To help you to employ the trainee WorkCover may offer a wage subsidy, workers compensation premium discount and protection from the costs of

second injury through the JobCover Placement Program. Ask the Rehabilitation Provider to investigate this for you or telephone the JobCover Hotline on 1800 801 905 (out of Sydney) or 9370 5640 (Sydney).

If the trainee has had difficulties with the skills or the physical requirements of the job, your honest feedback to the provider and the trainee will be helpful in working in future directions.

### WORK TRIAL AGREEMENT

**To enter into a Work Trial agreement you must have signed a Work Trial Agreement form and this must have been approved by WorkCover. Please do not allow a Work Trial to commence without confirmation from WorkCover.**

### FURTHER INFORMATION

*For further information you may wish to read:*

- Work Trial Agreement
- Guidelines for Insurers and Rehabilitation Providers

Telephone WorkCover's Vocational Rehabilitation Unit on (02) 9370543

*Emma developed severe dermatitis whilst working as an apprentice hairdresser. She needed to wear gloves and to avoid contact with water and chemicals. As this was not possible in hairdressing, her rehabilitation provider recommended that she retrain for more suitable work. Pharmacy Assistant work was decided upon and a Work Trial was organised at a local pharmacy who were planning to recruit. The pharmacy agreed to provide on the job training. Emma gained practical work experience and was able to demonstrate her ability to do the job. The host employer was able to assess her suitability for the position and to train a potential employee at no cost.*

*As the host employer was very impressed with Emma's work he had no hesitation in offering her the position when the Work Trial finished.*