

OR PROVIDER BROADCAST

OES GUIDELINES ON SERVICE PROVISION DURATION GREATER THAN 12 MONTHS

The OES service model requires that Agents approve OES services for a period of greater than 12 months only in exceptional circumstances.

In order to meet this criterion, the OR provider must demonstrate in the OES 12 month progress report why the worker:

- a) has not returned to pre-injury work
- b) is not suitable for New Employer Services
- c) requires further OES servicing

OR Providers have indicated to us that there exists some confusion regarding precisely what type of circumstances should be considered exceptional. A set of examples has been developed to clarify this issue and will be available with the next broadcast. Please note that this list is not exhaustive and a discussion with the Agent must be had in **all cases**. A decision on continued servicing post 12 months of OES can only be made by an Injury Management Advisor.

When Providers and Agents are considering whether the continued application of OR servicing for greater than 12 months has merit the following simple test should be applied:

Has this worker made continued progress towards a realistic RTW goal, and will this worker reach that goal within a discrete, limited period of continued servicing?

If the answer to this question is yes, then this may be considered an exceptional circumstance.

Did you know?

WorkSafe recently looked at over 80 files that had received over 12 months of servicing. Not one of these workers had returned to work.

The following scenario is an example of a scenario that is NOT an exceptional circumstance

The worker has returned to work at less than pre-injury hours and has remained at the same number of hours for several weeks with no improvement.

Did you know?

In November 2008, over 80% of all files that received twelve months of servicing, continued to receive servicing beyond month 12.

SMALL BUSINESS REBATE PROGRAM

WorkSafe & VECCI are launching a new rebate program for small businesses in three target industry sectors – **food & beverage, wood products manufacture, road transport** – to purchase OHS controls targeting musculo-skeletal disorders.

The program is being delivered by VECCI (they are the first point of contact for applicants) and is funded by WorkSafe's Prevention Fund. Eligible small business owners and operators can obtain a rebate of up to \$500 to purchase quality lifting equipment from a specially selected range of hand trucks, trolleys and platform trucks.

Please spread the word and direct businesses that may be eligible and also related industry organisations to the web so we can maximise uptake of the rebate. It's a pilot program which has potential to grow and cover other industry sectors if it's successful.

Who is eligible?

To be eligible, a business must:

- Be based in Victoria
- Have a 2007/2008 certified annual remuneration of \$1 million or less
- Have a WorkSafe policy and be classified under that policy as a:
- Food manufacturer or
- Wood product manufacturer or
- Short distance road freight operator

How do businesses apply/find out more?

Contact VECCI for a simple application form - visit www.vecci.org.au or phone (03) 8662 5333.

OES ADVANCED REPORTING TEMPLATES

The OES advanced reporting templates have arrived! These templates are designed to make it much easier for OES providers to enter information into the reports, and to improve efficiency of the reporting process.

The new reports have a number of features designed to make your lives easier, including;

- Increased data validation
- Improved ease of tab functionality between fields
- Population of task reminders in Outlook
- Example text prompts in certain fields
- Greatly increased automation
- Mac compatible

Each OR Provider principal was sent the full suite of advanced report templates on 9th February 2009, along with a Notes document, that should be read prior to beginning to work with the templates. If for any reason your organisation did not receive the templates, please contact Rachel.altmann@worksafe.vic.gov.au. For any technical queries you may have regarding using the templates, please contact the developer, Brad Stevens, by email (brad@rehaboutcomes.com.au) or telephone (02 6023 4644)

As ever feedback on the reports is welcome. I hope you enjoy the new functionality.



VOCATIONAL REDEPLOYMENT – A NEW OES SERVICE

We have recently fielded a number of queries relating to the applicability of the OES model in circumstances where the original employer may have a number of completely separate and independent sites (workplaces) and providers are asked to perform job search type activities to find the worker a position at a different location of that employer. To assist providers we have amended the Vocational Re-education service (service item code RC770) to also include a Vocational Redeployment option. Providers may use this service where a worker is certified fit for their pre-injury duties but there are no suitable duties at the injury workplace but another workplace of that employer has suitable duties.

The cost of a RC770 assessment must be negotiated with the Agent and is payable at an hourly negotiated rate for up to 5 hours. An OR provider should highlight within an OES progress report that such an assessment is recommended however, a separate request of the service including the cost of that assessment must be approved by the Agent in addition to the OES funding that has already been approved.

<i>Service description</i>	<i>Consultant Qualifications</i>
<p>Vocational Re-Education Assessment:</p> <p>Vocational re-education should be recommended whether suitable duties cannot be identified for the worker using their existing transferable skills however other options are likely to be available at the injury workplace <i>or other workplace of the injury employer</i>.</p> <p>This assessment will consider the suitable employment identified for the worker & determine which type of course or retraining options are most likely to assist the worker to return to work with their pre-injury employer.</p> <p>Vocational Re-Deployment Assessment:</p> <p>This type of assessment is used for workers with a current capacity for worker who may be able to return to work at another location of the employer other than the location where they were injured. The assessment will identify the worker's transferable skills and abilities, and outline the agreed actions to be undertaken to enable the worker to seek other suitable employment opportunities at another locations—of the injury employer including, but not limited to, preparing a resume for the worker as well as ensuring the worker has the necessary skills to participate effectively in job seeking.</p>	<p>A qualified rehabilitation professional.</p> <p>A vocational adviser. This person has received formal; qualifications in, &/or experience in employment services & knowledge of current labour markets.</p>

PEER REVIEW

In the last broadcast we outlined the selection criteria we have used in the recruitment of the two consultants. We are very pleased to announce that Andrew Paice (Nabenet) and Frank Imbesi (Ayles Management Services) have agreed to become our first peer review consultants for the pilot period. You may also recall from our broadcast in December that we see this initiative as a very important component for continuous improvement within the Occupational Rehabilitation industry, with the main objectives being:

- Improve RTW outcomes
- Improve quality and effectiveness of servicing
- Informing the OR providers of the standards expected from OR servicing
- Improve client satisfaction



The main elements of the peer review process are:

- Starting on 2 March for 12-16 weeks followed by an evaluation prior to consideration of a full roll out.
- It is expected the panel will review a maximum of 100 files involving as many OR providers as possible.
- Only claim's receiving OES will be reviewed base on the OES guidelines.
- Initially we will review claims reaching 6 and 12 months
- The OR provider will not be required to provide any documentation. The review will be based on the agent's claim file and the information in ACCtion and Novus.
- OR providers will be sent a letter informing them of the review taking place and on which file(s). An example of the standard letter is attached.
- The consultant will contact the provider to arrange a teleconference with the rehab consultant. The OR provider principal is more that welcome to participate in this process.
- As a result of the discussion a management plan will be agreed and a Fax will be sent by the consultant confirming the review outcomes/plan.
- The agent will also review the management plan, assess whether it is appropriate and will then send a letter to the provider confirming the action to be taken. The three options will be, **maintain**, **vary** and **suspend**. The OR provider should not change the current provision of OES until they have received a letter from the agent. These letters are also attached.

Certificate IV in Financial Services (Workers Compensation)

This certificate course promoted by WorkSafe includes a module on Return to Work.

One of the assessment criteria for completion of this module is to visit an Occupational Rehabilitation provider, during which students will observe OR providers at work. The aim of this is so they may better understand the contribution that OR services make to the return to work strategy and the achievement of RTW goals.

WorkSafe is seeking expressions of interest from providers that would be happy to have a member of an Agent or WorkSafe attend their office and interact with their staff. This is a valuable part of the training, and ensures a better understanding, and appreciation, of the role of OR in the broader context of the scheme.

If you are able to assist, please email occupational_rehabilitation@worksafe.vic.gov.au