

**1.5
HOUR**

Workers' Comp Training Template for Supervisors

Supervisors are often the first to respond to an injury and are a critical component of successful work comp management. They must be trained so they are prepared for the most common obstacles and can participate in a program designed to cultivate a positive employer-employee relationship.

By learning simple concepts, supervisors both understand their influence on the claim outcome and know exactly what steps to take following a workplace injury.

“Support from senior management is required to be successful with supervisor training”

Evidence shows a simple 1.5 hour training can help supervisors understand their role and know how to appropriately respond to a workplace injury.

- A 2012 study (*Iles, 2012*) by the Liberty Mutual Research Institute showed by putting focus on improving the initial claim contact which starts with the supervisor:

- Average claim cost were reduced by 40%.

- Average claim duration was reduced by 58%.

- A 2001 Study (*Robert K. McLellan, 2001*) examined the effectiveness of a 1.5 hour supervisor training and found:

- One year following the training 82% of supervisors reported a greater awareness of their role in injury management.

- Supervisors were able to identify important aspects of their response included asking how the employee is feeling, expressing support, listening, and problem solving.



Critical Agenda Topics

Supervisor training can be tailored to your specific organization and culture, however, include the following critical agenda topics:

- I. Why you (the supervisor) are critically important in workers' compensation**
- II. Properly responding to injuries**
- III. Facilitating return to work**
- IV. Ongoing communication**
- V. Role-playing how to handle different scenarios**

I. Why you (the supervisor) are critically important in workers' compensation

Research (*L. Strunin, 2000*) shows that supervisors often have a negative view of employee injuries because of reduced productivity, the need for special attention, or additional required support.

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**SUPERVISOR'S
TEMPLATE**



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Demonstrate the importance of the supervisor role to gain their cooperation and buy-in with the following:

• **Leverage Research:**

- *Leverage Liberty Mutual Research Institute's conclusions that improved initial claim contact can reduce average claim cost by 40% & average duration by 58%. (Iles, 2012)*

• **Demonstrate the Large Variance in Injury Recovery**

- *Evidence-based medicine injury duration guidelines published by both Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) and MDGuidelines show EBM and actual claim outcomes vary greatly.*
- *For example: per MD Guidelines a Partial Rotator Cuff tear has a maximum psychological recovery time of 85 days for Very Heavy work, yet actual claim data shows only 50% of employee are back to work within 96 days, and 17% of employees never return to work after this injury.*

• **Demonstrate Emotional Cost of Injuries**

- *Discuss stories of friends or family members whose lives have been impacted by a work-related injury.*

II. Properly Responding to Injuries

Research (Iles, 2012), (William S. Shaw, 2003), (Gates, 1991) has shown how the supervisor responds to the injury is a significant factor in the outcome of the claim.

Properly responding to injuries includes:

1. **Demonstrate Care**
2. **Set Expectations**
3. **Facilitate Medical Treatment via Injury Triage**
4. **Document and Investigate the Injury**
5. **Consistent Communication**
6. **Provide Modified Duty**

III. Facilitating Return-to-Work

The most effective way to create a transitional duty position is to have a discussion with the injured worker about their injury and job tasks, and ask "what part of your job can you do today?"

Research (Scott W, 2013) has shown that collaborating directly with the injured worker about the types of tasks he can do for transitional duty is more important than solely relying on the job description, physical demands and restrictions from the physician.

IV. Ongoing Communication

Train supervisors on communication best practices with the injured worker.

- **Send a Get Well Card**
 - *Express care and the desire for the employee to return to work.*
- **First-Day Phone Call**
 - *Both give and receive information: express care and concern, get a feel for the*

employee's attitude, the kind of care received from the medical provider, and the prognosis.

• **Weekly Meetings**

- *Both give and receive information: express care and concern, inform employee they are wanted back at work, discuss treatment progress and transitional duty.*

V. Role Play Example Scenarios

The use of role-playing is a common training method used in the military and emergency medical response groups. While some supervisors may be uncomfortable 'acting out' example scenarios, it is effective to build confidence and enhance skills for how to handle specific scenarios properly.

Tip: Use actual claim scenarios from your loss run and discuss how each could have been improved. The goal is not to prosecute past behavior, but to use it as a learning tool for improvement.

References ~

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**WORKERS' COMP
TRAINING CENTER**