

# Businesses can benefit from Washington's Stay at Work incentive program to support injured workers in light-duty

Workplace injuries are costly. Costly to the business, and to the injured worker. But do you know that Labor & Industries (L&I) helps interested employers with the costs of supporting an injured worker in medically-appropriate light-duty during recovery?



Washington's Stay at Work Program reimburses eligible employers up to \$10,000 in wages for light-duty or modified jobs provided to injured workers during their recovery.

Using modified or light-duty as the foundation for building a return-to-work program at your job sites can save your business money while helping valued employees recover after a workplace injury.

## **BENEFITS FOR WORKERS ON LIGHT DUTY**

Studies show workers recover faster with better outcomes when placed on medically-appropriate light-duty during recovery. It helps keep the worker connected to peers and on a normal work schedule while recovering, which contributes to the healing process by maintaining physical activity, a sense of self-worth and quality of life.

Also, wage-replacement through workers' comp insurance pays 30-40% less than the worker's regular pay. By working in a modified or light-duty position, workers have less financial burden and stress, which aids in the healing process.

The longer an injured worker is out of work, the more it impacts their economic well-being. L&I studies show that workers off work between three months and three years lost up to half of their potential earning power which averaged out to \$625 less in income per month.

## **BENEFITS FOR BUSINESSES**

By implementing a return-to-work program that uses modified or light-duty, it tells workers that their employer values them and is concerned about their well-being.

Using medically-appropriate light-duty also reduces hiring and training costs, which can run between \$4,000 and \$7,000 depending on the position. It also helps manage the impact on your workers' compensation premiums.

Using the Stay at Work benefit can help offset what's called a "compensable claim" where wage-replacement and disability benefits are paid to the injured workers. Compensable claims count against an employers' experience rating and increase their premium costs.

More and more employers are using medically-approved light-duty to control workers' comp insurance costs, while helping their valued workers recovery from a workplace injury.

In addition to wage-replacement benefits of up to \$10,000, employers can also get reimbursed for up to \$2,500 for equipment and tools, \$1,000 for training, and \$400 for clothing if needed for the light-duty job.

To date, L&I has reimbursed Washington state employers over \$45 million for light-duty wages, helping more than 18,000 injured workers keep a workplace connection while recovering.

## **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Stays at Work Program benefits were created to help support both the injured worker and their employer. Some eligibly requirements for getting the incentive do apply. So it's worth it for businesses to understand how to use the benefit.

For example, not all light-duty work may qualify. It must be light-duty or modified work that is medically appropriate and meets the physical or mental restrictions for the injured worker as outlined by their medical provider.

Business representatives are encouraged to attend a free workshop or webinar to learn more about the Stay at Work Program benefits. For details, go to

[www.Lni.wa.gov/StayAtWork](http://www.Lni.wa.gov/StayAtWork)