TAC information for new employers

Working together
TAC Employer Incentive Package

Returning to work
About the TAC

The TAC is a Victorian Government-owned organisation whose role is to pay for treatment and support services for people injured in transport accidents. It is also involved in promoting road safety in Victoria and improving the state’s trauma system.

A key role of the TAC is to work with injured clients, employers and treaters to help the injured person return to work.

Working together

Working together we can support an injured person to return to productive employment.

The role of the health care professional

Your employee’s health care professional is an important person in the return to work process.

The TAC’s role in helping injured clients return to work

The TAC recognises that returning to work is an important part of an injured person’s rehabilitation after a transport accident. The TAC’s first step is to contact the injured person’s employer. However, in some instances the TAC client is unable to return to their pre-accident employer and/or their pre-accident role.

Where the pre-accident role is not suitable and the pre-accident employer does not have any other roles to offer, the TAC can assist our clients to find new employment.

As part of the return to work process, the TAC can provide a package of incentives to support an employer while they help a TAC client return to employment. This package is discussed in more detail on page 2.
The role of the return to work specialist

The TAC contract external Occupational Rehabilitation Providers who employ qualified return to work specialists. A return to work specialist will work with you, the TAC client and the TAC to plan a return to work program that meets your needs and the needs of the TAC client.

The return to work specialist will:
- conduct a worksite assessment to create a working environment appropriate for you and the TAC client
- assess and recommend any necessary workplace modifications or equipment
- liaise with the TAC client’s health care professional(s) to ensure hours and duties are appropriate
- work with your occupational health and safety manager (if applicable)
- monitor the return to work program’s progress and provide reports to all parties as required
- be the key contact and act in an advisory role between you and the TAC client

Your role

You provide the essential ingredient in the return to work process, the job!

This may be in the form of one or more of the following:
- a full time employment opportunity
- a part time employment opportunity
- a casual employment opportunity
- a work trial opportunity: a short term trial role that helps build skills and confidence (see the Employer Incentive Package on page 2 for more information)

The TAC and the return to work specialist will discuss with you what benefits and supports are available if you are considering supporting a TAC client in their return to work. These supports will vary according to both the client’s needs and your needs as an employer.
The TAC may be able to offer you an Employer Incentive Package that contains several features. Fully funded by the TAC, the package may include full and partial wage subsidies, a one off incentive payment (to assist with any administrative costs), WorkCover insurance and the services of an independent return to work specialist.

The package is designed to ensure that the TAC client can work as safely and productively as possible, minimising any potential financial impact upon you and your business.

The Employer Incentive Package includes the following components:
- the trial phase
- graded wage subsidy
- WorkCover insurance

**The trial phase**

To begin the program, the return to work specialist may recommend a trial phase. The trial phase is a four-week program designed to assist the TAC client to learn the job and increase their productivity (if required). This four-week trial also gives you the opportunity to see the client at work and ensure you’re happy with the program in general.

For the period of the trial phase, the TAC will fully reimburse you for the hours the TAC client works. The number of hours they work depends on their capacity and what has been agreed to between the return to work specialist, the treating practitioner, the client and yourself.

**Graded wage subsidy**

The graded wage subsidy is designed to support you while the TAC client becomes confident and familiar in their new workplace. This subsidy will provide you with financial assistance while the client reaches full productivity.

Throughout this period, the TAC will reimburse you a percentage of the hours worked, based on your client’s agreed productivity. As the TAC client’s productivity increases, the wage subsidy decreases. The graded wage subsidy can be paid until the client is performing the duties required of their new role.

**WorkCover insurance**

The TAC Employer Incentive Package contains a WorkCover insurance policy to give you peace of mind. This protects you in the event that the TAC client is injured during a TAC return to work program. WorkCover insurance can be provided alone or together with the trial phase or graded wage subsidy.

This means, as an employer, you are given premium protection in the event of a WorkCover claim, for the period of the return to work program. In addition, the TAC will reimburse the WorkCover excess incurred as a result of an accepted claim.

During the return to work program you will be responsible for the usual components of the employment relationship. These include supervision, performance management, superannuation, industrial relations, human resources and all other WorkCover obligations.

WorkCover insurance is generally available as part of the Employer Incentive Package but some exclusions apply.

These include:
- interstate employers (ie. outside of Victoria)
- employers who self insure for WorkCover
- employers covered by ComCare

**Limited work trial**

In some circumstances, you may not have any permanent work available, but may be able to accommodate a TAC client for a short term work trial (eg. to cover annual leave or sick leave). This would provide a TAC client with an opportunity to build skills and confidence while being supported by an employer, the TAC and a return to work specialist.

During a limited work trial you are reimbursed an agreed wage subsidy. The return to work specialist supervises the program and the TAC client gains invaluable experience and potentially a current reference.

The work trial can be beneficial to you as an employer. You can:
- benefit from the services of a suitably qualified worker
- receive wage subsidies from the TAC
- receive WorkCover indemnity during the trial
The following steps are a guide to what you can expect before a TAC client begins work:

- The return to work specialist will conduct a work-site assessment. During this assessment, the TAC client’s productivity will be assessed, and the wage subsidy will be agreed upon.
- The return to work specialist will then provide a report to all parties, confirming duties, wage subsidies, and any other recommendations (e.g., equipment needs).
- The TAC will confirm in writing the details of the return to work plan, WorkCover insurance, and information regarding subsidy payments.

The following steps are a guide to what you can expect after the TAC client begins work:

- The client will start work as per the return to work plan.
- During the return to work plan, you should pay the TAC client only for the hours they work.
- Either you or the TAC client should send payslips to the TAC. Payslips are required so that you can be reimbursed the agreed wage subsidy (for hours worked) and to calculate any partial income benefit due to the client.
- The return to work specialist will conduct regular reviews throughout the return to work plan and every six weeks they will provide a progress report to all parties detailing any changes in productivity, duties, and hours to be worked.
- The return to work program will normally run for a minimum of 18 weeks and the return to work specialist will finalise the program once the return to work goals are achieved.

Sam’s story

Before his accident Sam was a highly active worker, employed as a full time commercial plumber.

Sam was injured in a motorbike accident and sustained multiple injuries that left him unable to return to work to perform the physical duties associated with plumbing. Sam let the TAC know that he couldn’t return to his job but would like to look at some alternatives.

Following a period of rehabilitation, Sam was cleared by his doctor to look at returning to suitable employment. The TAC referred Sam to a return to work specialist who conducted a vocational assessment and completed a vocational plan to assist him to return to work. The plan helped Sam search for employment in the plumbing and building industry in roles which involved less physically demanding duties. With help from his return to work specialist, Sam found a job selling plumbing supplies for a large retail outlet. The return to work specialist discussed a return to work program with the new employer and also talked about the different employer incentives such as a work trial, WorkCover insurance, and wage subsidies that the TAC could offer.

Together with Sam and his new employer, the return to work specialist conducted a worksite assessment and a return to work plan was devised starting with a trial phase to monitor Sam’s initial return to work. As part of the trial phase, the TAC reimbursed the employer 100% of Sam’s wages and paid WorkCover insurance as part of the employer incentive package.

After the four week trial phase, Sam’s employer was so impressed with his performance that he decided to employ him on a full-time basis. As Sam had not yet completed training with the in house systems necessary to complete all his new duties, the TAC continued to pay 100% subsidies to the employer for a further two weeks until Sam had received further training.

An ongoing return to work plan was created to assist Sam to increase his productivity and working hours. Throughout the plan, the employer received a graded wage subsidy based on Sam’s productivity, along with WorkCover insurance and the assistance of the return to work specialist provider.

By working together, Sam’s return to work plan is on track. Sam is happy he is back in the workforce, and the employer is happy to have a motivated staff member with great knowledge to provide the best service for their customers.
The TAC will work with you and your employee to ensure they have a safe and productive return to work.

Frequently asked questions

Can I expect my new employee to be fully fit?

In most circumstances, the client is fully fit for the duties required of them and this is why the return to work specialist has targeted a specific job type. If the client does have any restrictions, you will be made aware of these, however they would normally not impact on what is required of them in the role.

Depending on the length of time out of the workforce due to injury, the client may require a graded return to work. So, although they are cleared as fully fit to undertake the required duties, it may be recommended that they increase their work hours over a number of weeks.

I'm worried that if I employ someone who isn't fully fit, my business may suffer due to lost productivity. What type of assistance is available?

As part of the Employer Incentive Package, the TAC can consider paying a wage subsidy to compensate your business while you support the TAC client in their return to work. These subsidies will be developed with the help of a return to work specialist and will be agreed upon by all parties before any return to work program commences, so that you know exactly what to expect.

What happens if the worker injures themselves during their new employment?

Contact the TAC immediately to discuss the injury and the next steps.

Depending on the injury, the return to work program can be modified or suspended for a period, and/or a WorkCover claim form can be lodged.

Where a WorkCover claim is lodged, the TAC’s insurer will assess the claim as per the normal processes.

As an employer, you are given premium protection in the event of an accepted WorkCover claim, regardless of the nature of the injury. In addition, the TAC will reimburse the WorkCover excess incurred as a result of that claim.

Who will pay for sick leave if my employee has to have time off for treatment for their accident injuries?

It is expected that the TAC client arrange any medical appointments outside of normal business hours. However if the TAC client has to have time off work due to their accident injuries, they need to advise the TAC of this via a certificate of capacity, or a medical report from their treating practitioner. If approved, the TAC can organise a reimbursement to you or pay the TAC client directly for the time they require off work.

What is the difference between the trial phase and the graded wage subsidy in a return to work program?

The trial phase is designed to help the TAC client return to their normal hours and duties (if they do not commence at these) and allows the return to work specialist to fine tune their recommendations, if necessary, before the graded return to work commences. It also allows you as the employer to view the client at work and to be confident in the client’s skills, work ethic and capacity to undertake the job.

During the trial phase the TAC will reimburse you 100% for the hours the TAC client works.

If the graded wage subsidy is required, the productivity of the client is established and the wage subsidy paid to the employer is based on the productivity while at work. For example, if the client is 70% productive in his/her required duties, the TAC will reimburse the employer 30% of the wage for the hours worked. The wage subsidy decreases as the TAC client’s productivity increases.

How long will it take to receive the wage subsidies? Who can I contact for support?

When the return to work program is established, you will be provided with a fax number where payslips must be faxed to. Generally, payments will be received in your bank account within two business days, once the income officer has received all the necessary paper work and processed the payment.

If you have questions that you need answered in regards to payments, you should call the TAC general enquires department on 1300 654 329.
If for some reason, general enquiries are unable to answer your query, they will transfer you to the TAC case manager.

What other incentives are available if I look at employing a TAC client?

Employers who employ a TAC client may be eligible for a one off payment (generally $500), to assist with the administrative costs of hiring and training the TAC client.

What if modifications are needed for the workplace? Who will pay for them?

The TAC can consider paying the cost of reasonable workplace modifications that will assist with an employee’s return to work. The TAC client’s doctor should forward a certificate of capacity to the TAC which outlines the types of modifications or equipment required.

The TAC will then organise for a return to work specialist to conduct a worksite assessment. They will discuss the recommendations with the TAC client’s treating doctor and advise the TAC on the modifications required. If appropriate, the TAC will then pay for these modifications to help your injured worker return safely.

How long will the return to work specialist be involved in my TAC client’s return to work?

The return to work specialist will be involved with the client for the duration of the return to work program. In some instances, the client’s sustainability will need to be monitored for a longer period. This can be negotiated between the return to work specialist, the TAC and any other relevant party involved in the return to work program (eg. GP, occupational therapist).

If the TAC client requires further vocational assistance after the return to work specialist has ceased services it is important that contact is made with the client’s TAC case manager. The case manager can talk to you about available options to assist the client in maintaining their employment.

Depending on the injury, the return to work program can be modified or suspended for a period
Contact us

Telephone
8.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday
1300 654 329 (local call)
1800 332 556 (toll-free outside the Melbourne metropolitan area)

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60 Brougham Street
Geelong VIC 3220

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Melbourne VIC 3001

Website
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