

STRESS & FATIGUE IN THE WORKPLACE:

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGERS AND STAFF

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INTRODUCTION

As an employer, Lincoln University is required to manage work-related stress and fatigue. The University has systems in place to monitor the work environment and ensure that all hazards, including stress and fatigue, do not cause employees or other people unnecessary physical or mental harm (defined as “illness”, “injury” or both). The University places a high value on creating and maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for all its employees and recognises that this duty of care extends to all aspects of occupational health and safety, including the effects of stress and fatigue.

PURPOSE

1. To develop an organisational culture and work practices that lead to a healthy and safe work environment.
2. To assist all staff to understand the causes of stress and fatigue, and to work together in ways that encourage positive responses to work demands.
3. To enable staff to identify indicators or symptoms of stress and fatigue and to assess the extent to which they or other individuals are managing them
4. To encourage managers and staff to seek information and early assistance in managing their own stress in a constructive way.
5. To monitor organisational stress indicators e.g. absenteeism, sick leave, turnover, exit interviews.
6. To regularly review and evaluate stress management processes.
7. To monitor fatigue indicators e.g. apathy, bad moods, reduced alertness and ability to perform mental and physical tasks.

DEFINITION OF STRESS

There are many definitions of stress and theories about what causes it. Worksafe NZ define workplace stress as “the result of the interaction between a person and their work environment. For the person it is the awareness of not being able to cope with the demands of their work environment, with an associated negative emotional response.”

DEFINITION OF FATIGUE

Worksafe NZ define stress as “the temporary inability, or decrease in ability, or strong disinclination to respond to a situation because of previous over-activity whether mental, emotional or physical.” For more information see appendix 4.

SCOPE

Every job brings its own pressures and demands and these are an unavoidable part of working life. While it is widely acknowledged that some pressure can be a good thing, excessive stress or fatigue is damaging. They may arise from both the workplace and in the life of employees away from work. While the

University has little influence over external factors, it is committed to identifying sources of stress and fatigue in the workplace and taking appropriate action to eliminate or reduce them.

The following guidelines provide a framework for stress management in the workplace. Staff experiencing stress for personal reasons, however, may also benefit from the information outlined here. While stress may occur among both staff and students, these guidelines are concerned with the University's responsibilities as an employer towards its staff.

RESPONSIBILITIES

What can the University do?

- Provide training and information for managers and supervisors in effective management practices and styles, covering the nature of stress, and promoting responsible prevention and rehabilitation attitudes towards it.
- Make seminars available to staff to enable them to identify indicators of stress in themselves and others and to manage it effectively.
- Where appropriate and reasonable, give consideration to adjusting the physical environment, the workload, job task design, pacing of work and work schedules to alleviate significant stress/distress for an individual, in full consultation with the individual concerned.
- Continue to make available free, specialist counselling for staff through the EAP programme regardless of whether the stress is work-related or personal.
- Provide up-to-date and accessible information on stress.
- Regularly monitor 'organisational symptoms of stress.

What can you do as a manager?

Prevention:

- Encourage staff to attend training or information seminars on identifying stress indicators in themselves or others.
- Consult with employees to identify stressors in the workplace.
- Consider job design, job descriptions and performance targets with the aim of reducing unnecessary stressors.
- Allow your staff to participate in some of the decision-making as appropriate and exercise as much autonomy as is practicable.
- Provide training (as appropriate) to enable work to be done most effectively.
- Provide accurate, fair and prompt feedback on performance and remember to praise your staff for work well done.
- Promote activities that make the workplace healthier, more stimulating and more fun.

Early Intervention:

- Act immediately - do not ignore the signs.
- Explore whether a staff member's stress is in any way job related, involve HR, discuss ways of alleviating it in the short term, and then focus on the sources of stress to consider long term solutions.
- Short term solutions could include sharing tasks amongst other staff, taking leave, or adopting flexible or reduced hours.
- Long term solutions should aim to eliminate or minimise the cause of stress where possible - the preventative strategies outlined above should be used.
- Report and develop a stress and fatigue management plan. See appendix 5 and 6 for templates.

What can you do as a colleague?

- Listen attentively with care and empathy if a colleague confides in you.
- Try to talk with your colleague if you believe he or she is very stressed; or encourage your colleague to talk with his or her manager, or a sympathetic friend.

- ❑ Let your colleague know about possible options for helping themselves:
 - referral to EAP for professional counselling;
 - seminars for staff on stress management and individual relaxation techniques;
 - discuss sources of work related stress with manager (if possible and appropriate).

What can you do for yourself?

- ❑ Manage your time so you work on the most important tasks.
- ❑ Take regular, necessary breaks during the day.
- ❑ Take your annual leave.
- ❑ Discuss the issues that are causing you stress with your manager along with any suggested solutions.
- ❑ Seek advice and help from others - talk to partners, friends, colleagues, or your manager if possible.
- ❑ Learn a relaxation technique - and allow yourself time to use it.
- ❑ Exercise - consider having a health and exercise consultation at the Rec Centre.
- ❑ Consider professional counselling through the EAP programme.
- ❑ Cut down on stimulants (especially caffeine) and depressants (especially alcohol).
- ❑ Put some fun in your life - laughter is the best medicine!

PROCEDURES

- ❑ Stress should be recognised as a potential psychological hazard and managed within the University's current arrangements for health and safety. Consider stress where appropriate within hazard reviews and audits, and in particular during periods of restructuring, changing employment conditions and/or conflict.
- ❑ Managers will be offered training to help them identify and control negative stress within their areas of responsibility. Such courses may include communication skills, conflict resolution, and/or managing change.
- ❑ Managers should regard institutional features that create stress as problems to be reported to senior managers in the same way as any other significant problem which cannot be resolved locally.
- ❑ Staff will be encouraged to attend stress awareness and management courses, or specific job-related courses, so they are better able to handle the pressures they encounter, even though their stress response may not yet be affecting their performance at work or impacting on their personal well-being.
- ❑ Where problems have developed, staff and managers are encouraged to use the Employee Assistance Programme. The University's Harassment Policy should be used if harassment is the underlying source of the distress.
- ❑ These guidelines are available to all staff on the staff intranet
- ❑ Where appropriate developed a Rehabilitation plan and monitoring regime. Where this is to be done a stress notification form must be completed (see appendix 5).

The information provided here is of a general nature. More specific assistance and advice can be obtained from Human Resources, your Health & Safety representative, your union representative or through contacting the Employee Assistance Programme (refer to Appendix 2: Useful Contacts).

REVIEW

These Stress Guidelines apply to all employees and are subject to review and evaluation. Regular evaluations and reviews will be conducted to (i) ensure that the aims of the Stress Guidelines are being met, and to (ii) assess the effectiveness of the stress prevention, management and treatment strategies implemented.

To be reviewed every two years. Next review due: August 2018.

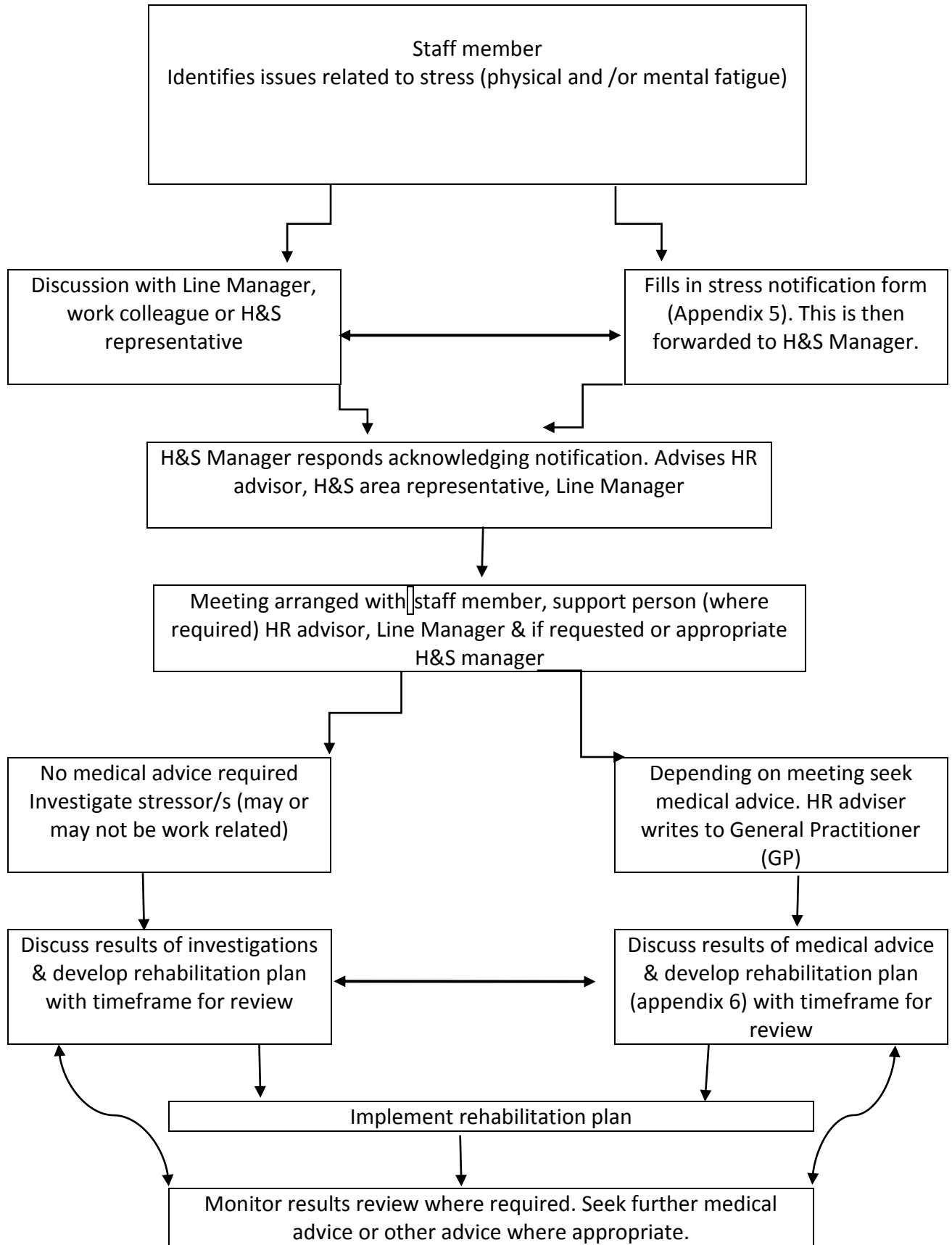
APPENDIX 1 SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS WHICH MAY BE INDICATIVE OF STRESS

<p>Physiological</p>	<p>Cardiovascular symptoms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High blood pressures • Irregular heart beat • High cholesterol • Accelerate blood clotting <p>Biochemical symptoms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased catecholamines • Increased cortisol • Increased uric acid <p>Gastrointestinal symptoms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peptic ulcers <p>Musculoskeletal symptoms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muscle tension • Back pain • Neck pain <p>Headaches</p> <p>Blurred vision</p> <p>Dizziness</p>
<p>Behavioural</p>	<p>Increase smoking</p> <p>Increase in drug consumption</p> <p>Increase alcohol consumption</p> <p>Aggressive behaviour</p> <p>Staying away from work</p> <p>Increase in errors and accidents</p> <p>Overeating</p> <p>Insomnia</p> <p>Irritability</p> <p>Social withdrawal</p> <p>Reduced exercise</p>
<p>Emotional</p>	<p>Job dissatisfaction</p> <p>Anxiety/ tension</p> <p>Depression</p> <p>Lack of self confidence</p> <p>Burnout</p>
<p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Poor concentration</p> <p>Poor learning ability</p> <p>Repetitive and intrusive thoughts</p>

APPENDIX 2: USEFUL CONTACTS

Position	Name	Contact
Health & Safety Manager	Adrian Brown	4230 592
Your Health & Safety Representative	Refer to your nearest noticeboard or intranet for an updated list	
Your Human Resources contact	See HR intranet	4230590
Your union representative	Cindy Doull, TEU	4230877
Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)	EAP Services, Christchurch	(03) 348 0854
Informative Websites	www.business.govt.nz/worksafe www.acc.co.nz/ www.eap.co.nz	

APPENDIX 3: FLOW CHART



NB: Any incident of stress and/or fatigue needs to be reported as per the University policy on hazard management as well as the accident reporting & investigation and hazard identification procedures. Please note the requirement to fill out an incident form.

APPENDIX 4:

FATIGUE

Definition: (as defined by Worksafe)

Fatigue is the temporary inability, or decrease in ability, or strong disinclination to respond to a situation because of previous over-activity, mental, emotional or physical.

Fatigue can occur for many different reasons — physical, mental or emotional. Being tired, “drained” or exhausted are familiar feelings for everybody. These feelings, if severe or prolonged, can compromise health and safety and lead to a person becoming “unsafe”.

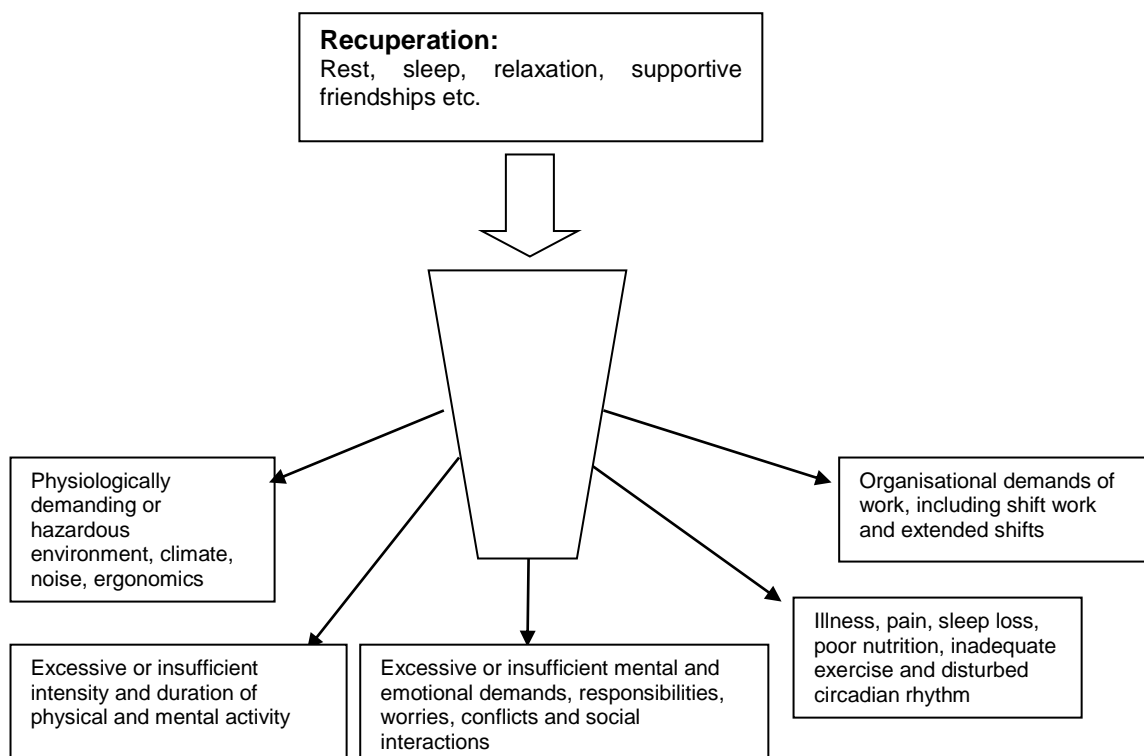
Shift work and extended work hours disrupts the internal body clock (circadian rhythm), affecting behaviour, alertness, reaction times and mental capacity. It can lead to sleep deprivation, which results in fatigue, sleepiness and disorientation and has major implications for safety both at home and in a work environment.

Research indicates, for example, that people who have gone without sleep for long enough are just as impaired as people who are over the legal limit for alcohol.

Stress can contribute to fatigue. Impairment from this cause — being unable to carry on working safely through fatigue, has obvious implications for workplace safety.

The simple “bucket model” of fatigue shows a reservoir of tolerance for activity. The model shows that a balance is needed between work demands, home events and physical and mental effort and rest.

(From MBIE handout)



Effort drains the bucket and adequate recuperation is needed to refill it.

Responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work act (2015)

Employers are required to take all reasonable practicable steps to prevent harm occurring to employees. The Acts require employers to adopt a systematic approach to identifying, assessing and controlling hazards at work.

Because impairment can arise from stress or fatigue, that may occur at home or at work, employers should aim to identify this impairment when it threatens workplace health and safety. Therefore a failure to ask questions, to ascertain a person's ability to work can be seen as a breach of their legal obligations.

Employees also have obligations. In this context employees should use opportunities for recuperation responsibly. They should ensure that the personal life choices they make (e.g. use of alcohol or recreational drugs or working second jobs which prevent adequate rest) don't pose a risk of harm to themselves or other people at work.

Symptoms of Fatigue:

- Sluggishness
- Reduced alertness
- Reduced ability to perform mental and physical tasks.

e.g.

- Forgetfulness
- Poor communication
- Poor decision making
- Apathy
- Lethargy
- Bad moods
- Increased reaction times

Lincoln University – Stress/fatigue Notification

This is to be used in conjunction with the stress & fatigue guidelines.

Personal Details

Name: _____ DOB: _____ Male Female
 Occupation: _____ Work Area: _____

Period of Employment 1st week 1st month 1-6 months
 6 months to 1 year 1 - 5 years Over 5 years

Time taken of work _____ Medical certificate supplied _____

Stress/fatigue details

Date Notified _____ **Workplace support person** *(optional)* _____

Medical practitioner _____ **Area H&S Adviser** _____

Stressors identified

	Yes	No
Workplace relationship		
Non work relationship		
Type of work		
Hours of work		
Workload		
Medical condition		
Work environment (heat, noise etc)		
Task repetitiveness		
Personal factors		
Miscellaneous?		
Other		

Describe in your own words the stressors effecting your environment

Effects of stress/fatigue

Describe in your own word the effect this is having

I

How can a recurrence be prevented? *(Please refer to guidelines)*

1. Employee: _____

2. Health and Safety Manager: _____

_____ Signature: _____

Follow up action *(Health and Safety Manager to complete):*

3. Action to be taken: _____

4. Person to action: _____ Date to action by: _____

5. Hazards identified as a result of this incident are to be included in the Division's hazard register.

Date included in hazard register: _____ Signature: _____

7. Back to work monitoring program implemented Signature: _____

8. Back to work monitoring program completed Signature: _____

9. Health and Safety Manager: _____ Date: _____

Comments

Please forward this form (or a copy) to the Health and Safety Manager as soon as you are able.

- 1. We are legally required, in case of a notifiable event, illness or injury, to notify Worksafe, as soon as practicable, and to provide written confirmation of this notification within seven days from the injury or illness.*

APPENDIX 6

Return to Work Plan – Stress/fatigue Lincoln University

(1) Employee Details

Name	Job Title
Hrs worked per day	Hrs worked per week

Location of work _____ Date to Commence: _____

Workplace support person _____

Goals of Return to Work Plan

Starting work days: _____ Target work days: _____
 Starting work hrs: _____ Target work hrs: _____

(2) Treating Practitioners Details

Other Treating Practitioner Details		Current Treatment Plan		
Name		Treatment Type	Freq. (Per week)	Goal (What by when)
Address				
Telephone				
Fax				
Medical discipline i.e. GP				

(3) Current Certified Capacity & Medical Recommendations

a. Details of Medical Capacity and Restrictions
As per treating practitioner certification:
b. Fitness For Duty
As per treating practitioner certification:
Is fit to continue pre-injury duties
Is fit to resume pre-injury duties from/.../... to/.../...
Is fit for Modified/ Alternate duties
Is unfit to pre injury/modified or alternate duties from/.../... To/.../...

(4) Duties to be completed for the plan period

Job Location :

Commencement date:

<p>a. Description of the specific duties/tasks to be undertaken, including physical and other requirements of the position. (Provide Attachments as required, i.e. a job analysis)</p>

(5) Plan Conditions & Stakeholder Agreement

<p>a. Detail any actions required by the stakeholders to facilitate optimal employee recovery and a safe and durable return to work.</p>																									
<p>Work environment modifications</p> <p>Assessments:</p> <p>Monitoring Arrangements:</p> <p>Plan to be monitored by: Frequency</p> <p><u>Actions for Plan Period:</u></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Action</th> <th>By Who</th> <th>By When</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p><u>Completed Actions and Outcomes from previous Plans</u></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Action</th> <th>Outcome</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Action	By Who	By When																			Action	Outcome		
Action	By Who	By When																							
Action	Outcome																								

Agreement		
	Signature	Date
Employee:		
Employer representative:		
Treating Practitioner:		

(7) Return to Work Outline

Week 1

Days Work (circle) M T W T F S S

Hours per Days _____

Breaks to be taken (no. & frequency) _____

Duties _____

Week 2

Days Work (circle) M T W T F S S

Hours per Days _____

Breaks to be taken (no. & frequency) _____

Duties _____

Week 3

Days Work (circle) M T W T F S S

Hours per Days _____

Breaks to be taken (no. & frequency) _____

Duties _____

Comments and actions during plan period:

Review Dates _____

Signed By

Employee: _____ **Manager/Supervisor:** _____

Treatment Provider: _____ **HSM:** _____