

Back to work



The following text is a summary of Prevent's handbook, *Back to work*, a publication about job adjustment and rehabilitation. The text is based on Swedish law.

The purpose is to provide support and advice to those parties engaged in workplace rehabilitation.

Returning to work is easier when the sick leave period does not become extended. Here four steps for keeping sick leave as short as possible are presented.

To reach a successful outcome, it is important to have the co-operation and participation of the employer, the employee, the safety representative, the attending physician, the National Health Insurance Authority and others, all working together to seek good solutions.

Step 1

Early measures

- Note early signals of poor health. In cases of repeated sick leave, discuss the situation with the employee.
- Establish contact with employees on sick leave at an early stage and maintain regular contact.
- Document anything relevant to the sick leave but keep such documentation strictly confidential.

Step 2

Plan for the return to work

- Ask the employee to report changes in the course of the disease or disability.
- Maintain contact with the attending physician, occupational health services and the National Health Insurance Authority.
- Prepare for a meeting on job adjustment.



Step 3

Evaluate working capacity and carry out job adaptation

- Evaluate working capacity together with the employee and with the help of the attending physician's report.
- Take medical and other rehabilitation measures, both planned and ongoing, into account.
- If necessary, seek assistance from the occupational health services for evaluation of working capacity and job and workplace adjustment.
- Document, evaluate and adjust the employee's work tasks and workplace.
- Together with the employee, draw up a proposal for job adjustment.

Step 4

Job training and evaluation

- Job training is appropriate when the employee can carry out certain work tasks, whether they are the employee's normal work tasks or others. At this point, work together to draw up a plan. Special work tools may be required.
- Follow up job training by holding regular discussions with the employee.
- After rehabilitation is complete, perform an evaluation of how successful the rehabilitation was and how well the company's routines functioned.

A preventive work environment programme identifies work related health and accident risks early. A company has a good workplace oriented rehabilitation programme when there is:

- A systematic work environment programme for early detection of health or accident risks. See the Swedish Work Environment Authority's directive AFS 2001:1
- A documented policy for job adjustment and rehabilitation.
- Information for all employees regarding the company's policy as well as rules and routines for sick leave, job adjustment and rehabilitation.
- Sufficient skills, resources and authority for those responsible for managing the rehabilitation process.
- Yearly follow up of the company's routines for job adjustment and rehabilitation.

This pamphlet is a joint effort of employer and union organizations.

Read more in Work Environment Law and Directives on job redesign and rehabilitation, AFS 1994:1. See <http://www.av.se>

If you want to know more ...



... about job redesign and rehabilitation, you can order the “Back to Work” handbook (Article number 835) at www.prevent.se/bokhandel (The publication is in Swedish.)

You can also call 08-402 02 20 to order the handbook.

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