

Risk Factors for Chronic Disability

Worker

- Age – older workers may have difficulty finding jobs because of their age.
- Place of residence – rural workers may have more difficulty finding other employment if they are unable to return to the job they held at the time of the injury.
- Education – jobs with fewer educational requirements usually involve more physical activity.
- Opinion as to the degree of disability is out of proportion to the nature of the injury.
- History of drug or alcohol abuse.
- Financial concerns reduce the ability to focus on returning to work as a priority.
- Family concerns such as separation, divorce, serious illness or death.
- Language – English as their second language may limit their ability to find work.
- Lack of mobility – if their spouse has a job in the community, or if they have lived there a long time, they may not want to move, limiting their ability to find work.
- Worker cannot be reached when Operations staff calls or attempts to meet with them.
- Worker relies on a third party (e.g., spouse or parent) to communicate with the WCB.
- Worker has a significant number of prior claims with the WCB.

Employment

- Employment history – length of employment with employer of record, seasonal work, issued a layoff, uncertainty about having a job to return to.
- Nature of employment – no light duties available, employer small in size.
- History of poor performance on the job – employer does not want worker to return to work.
- Excuses for not returning to work (e.g., no transportation).
- Little or no contact with employer after injury.
- Rate of compensation provides a sense of security, especially if income from the job the worker held at the time of the injury income was uncertain, sporadic or seasonal.
- Dissatisfaction with the job.
- Lack of job opportunities because of economic conditions within usual field of employment.

Medical

- Period of disability exceeds expected recovery time for the injury.
- Worker has other medical concerns at the same time as the injury.
- Lack of physical findings on medical reports to support a delay in returning to work.
- Worker frequently changes care providers.
- Past related concerns in same body area as the injury.
- Expansion or change in location of symptoms from those of the original injury.
- Worker does not participate in treatment, misses appointments, makes excuses for non-attendance, and has only vague recollection of care provider's advice.