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1.0 PURPOSE

Hardings Group wants everyone to feel supported if they are injured or become ill because of their work.

The return-to-work process is guided by respect, fairness, and consistency, helping people return to meaningful duties as soon as it is safe to do so.

This policy helps everyone understand how workers compensation claims are managed, what steps we take to coordinate suitable duties, keep communication clear, and meet our legal responsibilities.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees at Hardings Group. It covers injuries and illnesses that happen at work or as a direct result of work duties.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

Executive Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead a positive safety culture. • Ensure resources (time, people) are in place to support injured employees. • Maintain Workers Compensation Insurance coverage. • Support the return-to-work process by reviewing and endorsing return to work programs approved by the insurer and the RTW Coordinator. • Support fair treatment of injured employees and review injury management practices regularly.
RTW Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report the injury to the insurer within the required timeframe and submit all necessary paperwork. • Inform the employee of their right to lodge a claim and support them through the process.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with Project Manager / Coordinator regarding what duties are safe and suitable for the injured employee. • Coordinate the return-to-work process, including creating and updating injury management and return-to-work plans. • Ensure all return-to-work programs are approved by the insurer. • Liaise with the employee's doctor, the insurer, and relevant managers to ensure clear communication and appropriate duties are in place. • Provide practical guidance to managers and adjusting plans as needed. • Keep all records accurate, up to date, and confidential.
Project Managers/ Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote safe work practices. • Respond promptly to injuries and make sure they are reported to RTW Coordinator straight away. • Help identify suitable duties that align with medical advice. • Adjust work arrangements to support an injured employee's recovery, such as adjusting workdays / hours or reassigning tasks as per guidance from medical certificate. • Stay in regular contact with the returning employee and flag concerns with RTW Coordinator. • Support team understanding of temporary duty changes and promote an inclusive culture.
Team Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support injured employees with their day-to-day duties and check tasks are within their capacity. • Make practical workplace adjustments, such as adjusting or reassigning tasks, in line with restrictions identified in medical certificate. • Monitor how the employee is coping and raise issues promptly with the Project Manager or RTW Coordinator. • Treat the returning employee with respect and encourage the team to do the same. • Reinforce safety expectations and promote teamwork during the return process.
HSEQ Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep an eye on injury trends and suggest practical ways to improve site safety. • Help investigate incidents and make sure follow-up actions are put in place. • Support training and reminders around safe work practices and injury prevention.
Employees <i>These responsibilities apply to everyone at Hardings Group, including Project Managers, Team Leaders, and Executive Management.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow safe work practices and report injuries or near misses immediately. • Let your manager or the RTW Coordinator know immediately if a work-related injury has occurred. • Work within medical restrictions and communicate any issues with assigned duties. • Take part in the recovery process and follow treatment plans and medical advice. • Cooperate with any paperwork or reviews related to injury management or workers compensation claims. • Support colleagues returning from injury and treat everyone with respect.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

Injury Management	<p>The overall process of supporting an employee after an injury, from initial treatment through to their return to work. It includes medical care, communication, planning, and regular check-ins to make sure the employee is recovering and supported at each stage.</p> <p>Under the <i>Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (Tas)</i>, injury management is a coordinated and managed approach to workplace injury that involves all relevant parties: the employee, employer, insurer, and treating medical practitioners.</p>
Return to Work (RTW)	<p>The process of helping someone who's been injured or unwell get back to work safely. This might mean returning to their usual role or starting with lighter or modified duties. A formal Return to Work Plan may be developed to outline tasks, hours, and support needed during the recovery period.</p> <p>Return to work is a legal obligation under the <i>Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (Tas)</i>.</p>
Return to Work Coordinator	<p>The person responsible for managing return to work plans. They work with the employee, managers, medical providers, and the insurer to coordinate support.</p> <p>This is a legal requirement under the <i>Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (Tas)</i>.</p>
Suitable Duties	<p>Also known as "light duties" or "modified duties," these are temporary tasks that match what an injured employee can safely do while recovering. These might include avoiding heavy lifting or other strain, shorter shifts, or an alternative role altogether. Duties are designed to be meaningful and productive and are updated as the employee's capacity improves.</p> <p>Suitable duties are defined under the <i>Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (Tas)</i>.</p>
Work Related Injury or Illness	<p>An injury, illness or condition that happens at work or because of work. This could include physical injuries (like a fall or sprain) or health issues caused by work activities (like hearing loss or a repetitive strain injury).</p> <p>This is covered under the <i>Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (Tas)</i>.</p>
Workers Compensation	<p>A legal insurance system that covers employees who are injured or become ill because of work. It helps cover medical costs, rehabilitation, and lost wages if an employee can't work due to a job-related injury.</p> <p>Workers compensation is governed by the <i>Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (Tas)</i>.</p>

5.0 INJURIES EXCLUDED FROM WORKERS COMPENSATION

Some injuries are not covered under workers compensation.

These include:

- Injuries that occur while travelling from home to your usual workplace or first job site, and from the last jobsite back home are not covered. Workers compensation only applies if the travel is considered part of

your work duties such as when you are required to travel between job sites during the day, or when the employer directs you to a location where travel time is recognised as work.

- Injuries that occur during an unauthorised absence from work, for example, if someone leaves the site without permission.
- Injuries caused by serious or intentional misconduct, unless it results in death or permanent and serious injury.
- Injuries that are self-inflicted on purpose.

Where an injury or condition is not covered by workers compensation, Hardings Group may, if considered reasonable and appropriate, take steps under the Fitness for Work Policy to support safe working arrangements. These steps may include fitness assessments, medical clearances, temporary adjustments to duties, or leave arrangements.

6.0 GUIDELINES

6.1 Responding to injuries

Hardings Group is committed to ensuring that all work-related injuries are managed promptly, consistently, and comply with employer obligations under Workers Compensation Legislation.

The following steps support a safe, timely, and coordinated return to work process when an employee is injured at work:

- Immediate medical attention provided by Team Leader or designated first aider, emergency care arranged if required.
- Record and report all injuries in line with company incident reporting procedures.
- Notification to insurer must occur within three (3) business days of being informed of a work-related injury.
- Injured employee advised of their right to lodge a workers compensation claim within fourteen (14) days, using the nominated WorkSafe form.
- Incident logging is required for all injuries in the Hardings Group Management System, regardless of whether a formal claim is submitted.

Hardings Group expects employees to report any workplace injury as soon as possible.

6.2 Managing claims and meeting legal requirements

Hardings Group makes sure that all workers compensation claims are managed efficiently as per this policy and as per the RTW Coordinator.

The following steps guide our claims management process:

- Provide employees with the right forms and support throughout the claims process.
- Notify the insurer within 3 business days of receipt of a claim for compensation.
- Within 5 business days of receiving a completed claim and medical certificate from the employee, finalise the employer section and forward the paperwork to the insurer.
- Cooperate fully with the insurer at each stage of the process.
- Treat all employees fairly and respectfully when a claim is made.
- Maintain current workers compensation insurance and comply with all employer obligations under the Workers Compensation Legislation.
- Appoint a trained RTW Coordinator when required.

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6.3 Return to work support

Hardings Group supports injured workers to return to work safely and promptly, with support tailored to their recovery needs.

This approach includes:

- Start planning as soon as an injury is reported.
- Maintaining contact with the injured worker.
- Understanding medical recommendations.
- Identifying safe ways to keep them engaged in the workplace, such as modified duties or reduced hours.
- Preparing a written Return to Work Plan for longer absences, in consultation with the employee and their treating doctor.
- Outlining duties the worker can safely perform, their hours of work, and how responsibilities will evolve during recovery.
- Reviewing and updating the plan regularly.
- Sharing relevant job information with medical professionals to assist with planning.
- Following all medical restrictions and recommendations.
- Comply with the Fitness for Work Policy, including any medical assessments, fitness clearances, or alcohol and other drug testing arranged to confirm safe capacity for duties.
- Arranging assessments or workplace adjustments (when necessary).

Hardings Group expects employees to:

- Follow all reasonable instructions from the RTW Coordinator as part of the return-to-work process. Failure to do so may be treated as a breach of policy and could jeopardise continued employment.
- Actively participate in their return-to-work plan, including any retraining.
- Nominate a primary treating medical practitioner to assist in developing their return-to-work plan.
- Attend all scheduled medical and rehabilitation appointments.
- Follow medical advice, including any work restrictions and rehabilitation requirements.
- Arrange medical appointments so they do not interfere with work time (when working reduced hours).
- Accept reasonable alternative duties when offered.
- If unable to perform alternative duties under the plan, notify the RTW Coordinator, seek medical advice, and undertake treatment where appropriate.

7.0 COMMUNICATION AND WORKPLACE CULTURE

Hardings Group values respectful communication, especially during recovery and return to work.

To support this, we will:

- Maintain regular contact with injured employees, including those off work.
- Actively involve the injured employee in return-to-work planning.
- Inform teams of any changes to duties or rosters without sharing personal or medical details.
- All employees are expected to contribute to a respectful and inclusive workplace.
- Treat any form of unfair treatment, discrimination or inappropriate behaviour towards injured workers as a serious matter.

8.0 JOB SECURITY, AND ALTERNATIVE ROLES

If an employee is injured at work, the injured employee's role will remain open for a period of 12 months, as required by law.

If medical advice confirms they cannot return to their pre-injury duties, we'll work with them to explore safe and reasonable alternatives, consistent with the Fitness for Work Policy.

This may include:

- Offering suitable duties that match medical restrictions.
- Considering modified tasks, reduced hours, or a different role.
- Providing retraining or upskilling if it supports a safe return to work.
- Consulting with the employee, their treating medical practitioner/ specialists, and the insurer on the best options.

We ask that employees:

- Actively participate in discussions about alternative duties
- Engage in return-to-work planning and accept reasonable offers of suitable duties that align with medical advice. Concerns should be raised promptly with the RTW Coordinator. Any refusal will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, considering medical and operational factors.
- Raise any concerns about their return-to-work plan with their RTW Coordinator as soon as possible.

9.0 SUPPORT

If not satisfied with the return to work plan after internal discussions, employees can seek free, independent advice from Worker Assist; website workerassist.org.au or call 6216 7677.

Hardings Group recognises that returning to work after an injury can be challenging. Employees can access confidential counselling and support through our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at any stage during their recovery and return-to-work process at AccessEAP; website accesseap.com.au or call 1800 818 728.

10.0 TRAINING, PRIVACY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

We provide training, protect privacy, and continually improve how we manage injuries and return to work.

This includes:

- Providing employees with clear information on how to report injuries and engage in the return-to-work process.
- Training new managers and RTW Coordinators on their responsibilities.
- Using team meetings and safety alerts to reinforce key messages.
- Treating all personal and medical information confidentially and storing it securely in line with our policies.
- Restricting access to personal information to those directly involved in the return-to-work process.
- Making sure team updates focus only on duties and timeframes, not health information.

11.0 BREACH OF POLICY

Everyone covered by this policy is expected to follow it at all times. This includes following all reasonable instructions from the RTW Coordinator in relation to the return-to-work plan.

Refusal to follow such instructions without a valid reason may be considered serious misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action, up to and including terminations of employment.

POLICY AUTHORISATION

This policy has been reviewed and authorised by Hardings Group (TAS) Pty Ltd. It reflects the standards, expectations, and responsibilities applicable to all relevant personnel.

Should any changes be made to this policy, Hardings Group (TAS) Pty Ltd will communicate those changes through the established communication methods within the company.

This policy is effective from the date of authorisation and remains in effect until it is formally amended or withdrawn by Hardings Group (TAS) Pty Ltd.

Authorising Name: Nic Broomhall

Authorising Position: Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Authorising Signature:



Authorising Date: 11/12/2025

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