

Understanding Duty to Cooperate

**WORK SAFE.
FOR LIFE.**
WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD OF NOVA SCOTIA

Employer Perspective

Legislation in effect: July 15, 2025

We all want the same thing: Nova Scotians working.

Duty to Cooperate introduces accountability in the return-to-work equation. It helps keep everyone working together towards a common goal — getting Nova Scotians back to work safely and successfully.



Your Role in Recovery

In many cases, people can continue working after a workplace injury. But when time away from work is needed, employers are required to keep injured workers connected and supported in their safe and timely return to work.

Workers, employers, service providers, and WCB all have a role to play. Duty to Cooperate enables us to hold ourselves and others accountable to achieve better return-to-work outcomes for workers and employers.



Your Responsibilities

Employers have responsibilities when a worker is injured in the workplace.

- Contact the worker as soon as possible after the injury occurs.
- Maintain communication throughout recovery and full return to work.
- Establish a return-to-work plan.
- Attempt to provide suitable, available work that, where possible, restores the worker's pre-injury earnings.
- Provide WCB with any requested information about return to work.

Duty to Cooperate legislation does not change these responsibilities. Instead, it holds everyone more accountable in the return-to-work process.

Employers who are non-compliant in the Duty to Cooperate process may face penalties including the full cost of compensation.



You've got this! Follow **G.U.I.D.E.**

The great news is that you are likely already following with Duty to Cooperate requirements by creating and managing return-to-work plans for those with workplace injury. If you are unsure how to do this, follow this checklist:

- G** **Get involved early:** Contact the worker as soon as the injury occurs. Do not wait for WCB.
- U** **Understand how you will communicate:** Agree on how and when you will stay in touch with the worker.
- I** **Identify accommodation needs:** Understand the worker's abilities and any medical restrictions.
- D** **Determine suitable work:** Offer tasks that match the worker's current skills and abilities. Get creative!
- E** **Engage and cooperate throughout:** Stay engaged and work with your WCB Case Manager to support the return-to-work plan.



The Worker's Role

Workers also have to cooperate by:

- Maintaining communication with the employer throughout recovery.
- Accepting suitable work that is offered.

Duty to Cooperate starts once a worker reports a workplace injury and until the worker has recovered based on health care provider guidelines.

Workers who are non-compliant in the Duty to Cooperate process may face reduction or termination of benefits.

Learn More

Visit wcb.ns.ca/DutytoCooperate for more resources, including webinar recordings, Q&As and more.

Contact us

Do you have questions about preparing for Duty to Cooperate legislation? We're here to help.

Contact us at dutyto cooperate@wcb.ns.ca and someone will be in touch.

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