

# Understanding Duty to Cooperate

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

## Worker 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, workers are required to stay connected with their employer to support 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

Workers have responsibilities when they are injured in the workplace.

- Contact your employer as soon as possible after the injury occurs.
- Maintain communication throughout recovery and full return to work.
- Consider how to apply your skills and abilities to work during recovery.
- Help your employer to identify suitable, available work.
- 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.

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



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

The great news is that you are likely already following the Duty to Cooperate requirements. If you are unsure, follow this checklist:

- ☐ **G** **Get involved early:** Contact your employer as soon as the injury occurs.
- ☐ **U** **Understand how you will communicate:** Agree on how and when you will stay in touch with your employer.
- ☐ **I** **Identify accommodation needs:** Help your employer understand your skills, abilities and any medical restrictions.
- ☐ **D** **Determine suitable work:** Understand what tasks your employer has available that match your current skills and abilities.
- ☐ **E** **Engage and cooperate throughout:** Stay engaged and work with your WCB Case Manager to support your return-to-work plan.



## The Employer's Role

Employers also have to cooperate by:

- Maintaining communication with the worker throughout their recovery.
- Offering suitable work when available.

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

Employers who do not cooperate may be subject to penalties including the full cost of compensation.

## Learn More

Visit [wcb.ns.ca/DutytoCooperate](https://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 [dutytocooperate@wcb.ns.ca](mailto:dutytocooperate@wcb.ns.ca) and someone will be in touch.

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