



Our Services:

- Functional Capacity Evaluations
- Work Conditioning
- Job Analyses
- Fit for Duty Testing
- Employment Testing



NC Worker's Comp Reform – Part 1: Defining Suitable Employment

As a result of passage of HB 709, the term “suitable employment” has now been defined. There are some interesting implications and possible applications of this definition.

1. **Accurate job descriptions** that reflect the true physical demands of the job will be more important than ever.
2. Relying on the physician to “approve” a job description is tenuous at best – not only should the job description be accurate (whether it's the injured worker's regular job or a transitional duty job), but the **physician needs to have objective information** about the employee's abilities and whether they match the job being offered. Instead of burdening the physicians with questions, forms, job descriptions, and telephone conferences (which are now allowed), consider requesting a **Physical Abilities Test** or **Fit for Duty** test, which will identify the current physical abilities of the worker and if performed periodically throughout the rehab process, will document **evidence of the worker's progress** in his/her rehab.

On the surface, it would appear that Vocational Rehab services may see an increase in need, based on this reform bill. With the cap on payments (500 weeks), it will be important to assist injured workers to return to work as early and as safely as possible. For those workers who will not be able to return to their regular job, the expertise of Vocational Rehab Case Managers working closely with employers to **match the worker to the job that is within their abilities** will be vital. Incorporating a strong **functional testing and conditioning program** will ensure a smoother, faster return to appropriate work. Settling for a release to return to work based on an invalid FCE that was done too late in the process, should no longer be our modus operandi.

Overall, the bill is definitely a step in a positive direction for injured workers and employers. Tweaking it with a **continuum of services and collaborative efforts** between all parties involved, should be a goal for all of us. In a perfect world, injured workers will:

- get the medical care they need
- have **periodic functional testing** to determine their physical abilities and their progress in rehab
- return to work as soon as medically stable, in either transitional duty within their abilities, modified work or their regular job
- benefit from a **work conditioning program** focused on reducing or eliminating the deficits that prevent the worker from returning to work, for those cases when medical treatment is at a standstill, but the worker is not back to work. **(Work conditioning can also be a valuable part of a vocational rehab program – assisting a worker to return to work in a different job is much easier when the true abilities of the worker are known and can be documented on a daily basis.)**

An “interdisciplinary” approach to returning injured workers to the workforce would be beneficial to everyone. For more information about functional testing, work conditioning or job analysis, contact Job Ready Services.



Expanding our September Lunch & Learn

Due to the overwhelming response to our September 30 Lunch & Learn, “**Worker’s Comp Reform: An Insider’s View**”, we have decided to offer this topic again on **November 9**.

12:00pm – 2:00pm

Speaker: George Pender, attorney with Teague, Campbell, Dennis & Gorham

NEW LOCATION!!!

Trisure Insurance
4325 Lake Boone Trail
Raleigh, NC 27607

Learn the background of House Bill 709; what changes to the worker’s comp system have been made and what that means to you.

Credits Approved: Dept of Insurance – 2 hours
CCM & CRC – 2 hours

For more information about registering for the November Lunch & Learn, contact us at shea.peterson@jobreadyservices.net or call us at (919) 256-1400.



HR, Compliance & People Development

Job Ready is excited to be a partner with CAI in providing services to employers to reduce their worker’s comp costs and protect their workforce. CAI is committed to providing quality services to employers in HR compliance and training, and we are looking forward to supporting them in those efforts: www.capital.org.

See Job Ready at these conferences:

- Mid-Atlantic Logging & Biomass Expo in Selma – Oct 7-8
- ABC Safety Conference in Charlotte – Oct 13-14
 - Debra Lord will be a speaker
- NC Chamber Human Resource Conference in Cary – Oct 18
- 2011 Workers’ Compensation Education Conference – Oct 19-21
- NC Association of Occupational Health Nurses Conference in Wrightsville Beach – Oct 26-28

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We’re also on LinkedIn!

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