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Date: August 2012  
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**GENERAL MANUAL POLICY**

**APPROVED BY:**

  
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**Executive Director**

**CATEGORY:** Health & Safety

**TOPIC:** Early & Safe Return to Work

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**POLICY**

It is the policy of Community Living Thunder Bay that an Early and Safe Return to Work opportunity will be explored for all employees.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Early and Safe Return to Work Program is to provide a planned approach to assist employees in returning to work in a safe and timely manner by minimizing barriers.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

It is the responsibility of the Team Leaders/ Supervisors, in conjunction with Human Resources, the Union and the Modified Return to Work Committee to implement the Early and Safe Return to Work Program when required.

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### **PROCEDURE:**

#### **1.0 PURPOSE & DEFINITIONS:**

The Early and Safe Return to Work (ESRTW) Program is designed to attain the best performance in managing the Sick Leave plan, Long Term Disability (LTD), and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) in both human and financial terms. The goal of the ESRTW Program is to provide a planned approach to assist employees in returning to work in a safe and timely manner by minimizing barriers.

Workplace safety and employee well-being shall be promoted through various practices in place at CLTB, including the Health & Safety and Attendance Management Policies. However, in the event that illness/injury occurs, Community Living Thunder Bay's ESRTW Program provides a forum for:

- Conveying the message that employees are valued;
- Managing absences due to illness or injury;
- Intervening early at the onset of an illness or injury;
- Facilitating the rehabilitation of employees while expediting a safe return to work through an early return-to-work plan;
- Following confidentiality guidelines;
- Responding to the corporate/union vision of providing employees with a safe and healthy workplace;
- Focusing on illness/injury prevention;
- Promoting the image of a caring and responsible employer/union while contributing to employee and community morale; and
- Demonstrating compliance with legislation and regulations (e.g., WSIB Act, Duty to Accommodate, and the Collective Agreements).

#### **DEFINITIONS**

**Sick Leave plan:** CLTB's funded income continuance program for absences from work due to illness/injury incurred off the job.

**Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB):** Employer sponsored income replacement through the Ontario WSIB for work-related illness/injury requiring medical aid and/or a medical absence.

**Long Term Disability (LTD):** An employee funded insurance program through which eligible employees may derive income replacement for long-term illness/injury.

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**Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** An employer sponsored program designed to provide confidential, professional assistance to employees and their families to help them resolve problems that affect their personal lives and in some cases, their job performance.

### **2.0 IMPLEMENTATION: KEY PERSONNEL AND ROLE**

The Early and Safe Return to Work Program is an organization-wide effort that involves the cooperation of Management, Union (if applicable), Employees, Team Leaders/Supervisors, occupational health professionals, and human resources personnel (see Figure 1).

Broad-based support for the program is important. Experience has shown that the most successful organizations:

- Jointly share the responsibility between management and labour for assisting ill/injured employees to return to work;
- Recognize the capabilities and potential contributions that the ill/injured employee can make to the organization;
- Recognize that to have an ESRTW Program is a sound business practice;
- Support employee rehabilitation from the onset of illness/injury;
- Work cooperatively and collaboratively with the employees and Union to ensure success with disability management initiatives; and
- Obtain support from all areas of management.

#### **2.1 MODIFIED WORK COMMITTEE**

Support of the Early and Safe Return to Work Program by Senior Management and the Union is essential. CLTB has implemented a Modified Return to Work Committee with joint labour-management involvement, whose role is to:

- Reach a collaborative understanding with the various stakeholders regarding the program administration and operations;
- Involve the work force and obtain its commitment;
- Maintain effective, supportive policies and procedures for the ESRTW Program and the return-to-work practices;
- Maintain effective disability management protocols to ensure a systematic and standardized approach to claims and case management;
- Maintain effective operational relationships between the return-to-work plan, the Sick Leave plan, LTD and WSIB;
- Ensure that return-to-work plans are available, considered and facilitated when appropriate;
- Ensure that all stakeholders are educated and functionally aware of their roles and responsibilities in the ESRTW Program;
- Ensure ongoing ESRTW training and program promotion are provided to employees;
- Support the establishment of vocational rehabilitation plans for employees unable to return to their own jobs;

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- Regularly evaluate the ESRTW Program and ensure that the outcomes are reported to the appropriate stakeholders; and
- Use the ESRTW Program data to target illness/injury prevention.

### **2.2 EMPLOYEE**

The full support of employees is required to ensure the success of the Early and Safe Return to Work Program. Employees are expected to understand and support the intent and spirit of the program, and to recognize its positive impact on the entire workforce. An employee, for the purposes of this policy, is any person employed by Community Living Thunder Bay including non-union and those covered by collective agreements. The employee is responsible for:

- Being aware of their rights, responsibilities and role with respect to the ESRTW Program, EAP, Sick Leave, WSIB, and LTD benefits;
- Reporting promptly to their Team Leader/Supervisor any work related injury or illness as required in the Attendance policy, Health & Safety policy, and/or applicable collective agreement;
- Providing absence information and physical limitations (Functional Abilities Form) from the attending health care provider;
- Maintaining regular contact with the Team Leader/Supervisor and keeping him/her informed of any changes;
- Advising the treating physician of the ESRTW Program and the availability of modified duties;
- Maintaining regular contact with the WSIB as required;
- Participating in developing his/her return to work plan;
- Advising Team Leader/Supervisor if external medical attention is received for a work-related injury;
- Communicating health, social, and/or psychological concerns that may impact a safe and timely return to work to the Human Resources Advisor;
- Taking an active role in initiating, developing, and participating in a safe and timely return-to-work opportunity with the Team Leader/Supervisor/Union Representative, when applicable;
- Cooperating in any rehabilitation and/or return-to-work opportunity deemed appropriate by the Team Leader/Supervisor, Union & Human Resources Advisor;
- Communicating any concerns about the return-to-work opportunity to the Team Leader/Supervisor so that potential problems can be quickly resolved;
- Attending appointments with medical, physiotherapy or other rehabilitation specialists as required in the rehabilitation plan;
- Complying with treatment as outlined in their specific rehabilitation plan; and
- Providing feedback on ways to prevent employee illness/injury.

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### **2.3 MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISORS**

The full understanding and support of Management and Team Leaders/Supervisors is needed for the Early and Safe Return to Work Program to be successful. They need to be well informed about the positive impacts on employee morale and productivity, as well as the economic benefits of an Early and Safe Return to Work Program. A Team Leader/Supervisor, for the purpose of this policy, is defined as the first non-union employee to whom an affected employee reports. The key roles and responsibilities of Management and Team Leaders/Supervisors are:

- Investigating injury/complaint and ensuring immediate completion of incident report;
- Assisting employees to understand their rights, responsibilities and roles in the disability management process;
- Approving absence with medical information;
- Respecting the employee's right to confidentiality concerning medical diagnosis and other health information;
- Assisting with the development of a rehabilitation program;
- Assisting the Human Resources Advisor to monitor the recovery progress of ill/injured employee;
- Participating in providing return-to-work opportunities;
- Supporting employees participating in return-to-work opportunities;
- Assisting the Human Resources Advisor to monitor the progress of employees participating in return-to-work opportunities;
- Providing feedback on the ESRTW Program process and outcomes;
- Offering or referring employees to the EAP as deemed appropriate (See Section 4.0);
- Identifying positions within CLTB suitable for return-to-work opportunities;
- Providing feedback and support on employee illness/injury prevention initiatives on ways to prevent employee illness/injury; and

### **2.4 UNION REPRESENTATIVE (if applicable)**

Each Union Representative has a key role in assisting the members of their respective bargaining unit along with management, to identify appropriate return-to-work opportunities. The Union Representative is aware of employee rights, responsibilities, and roles in respect to the ESRTW Program, EAP, Sick Leave, WSIB, and LTD benefits; and the Union position in supporting return-to-work opportunities.

The Union for the purposes of this policy means unions and associations which are recognized bargaining units doing business with CLTB. A Union Representative, for the purposes of this policy, is defined as an employee member appointed by their union to participate in the Modified Return to Work Committee and to undertake the role and responsibilities outlined below. The role of the Union Representative is to:

- Assist their members to seek appropriate help when ill/injured;
- Respect the employee's right to confidentiality;

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- Provide information obtained to the Human Resources Advisor to monitor the recovery progress of ill/injured members;
- Participate, when required, in identifying return-to-work opportunities;
- Assist with the development of a rehabilitation program;
- Support their members who are participating in return-to-work opportunities;
- Provide feedback on the ESRTW process and outcomes;
- Suggest EAP support to members when appropriate;
- Provide feedback and support on ways to prevent employee illness/injury at CLTB; and
- Support injury prevention initiatives.

### **2.5 HUMAN RESOURCES ADVISOR**

At Community Living Thunder Bay, the Human Resources Advisor ensures that the daily operations of the ESRTW Program are carried out.

The Human Resources Advisor is usually the first line of contact with the ill/injured employee. The Team Leader/Supervisor notifies the Human Resources Advisor once the employee has been off work for more than 5 days for a non-work related injury/illness or immediately for a work related injury/illness, or if the employee is experiencing a diminished work capacity. The Human Resources Advisor has the responsibility for the overall program management and for helping to promote the development of relevant policies and procedures. The Human Resources Advisor is responsible for:

- Communicating with the employee as soon as possible after the injury/illness onset;
- Working with the employee to establish recovery and rehabilitation goals and objectives;
- Determining which outside professional help is needed, if any;
- Establishing liaison with outside professionals, insurers, and the WSIB, if applicable, on the employee's behalf;
- Establishing individual rehabilitation and return-to-work plans for employees with help from other professionals;
- Maintaining the confidentiality of health information and employee health records when advising the Team Leader/Supervisor/Union Representative (when applicable) of an employee's expected return-to-work date, physical capabilities, and any workplace restrictions;
- Adhering to the terms of the governing collective agreement(s) in relation to return-to-work opportunities, if applicable;
- Monitoring the progress of employees on return-to-work plans;
- Collecting, evaluating and maintaining ESRTW data;
- Communicating the intent, goals, roles and responsibilities of the ESRTW Program to all key players;
- Reporting ESRTW Program outcomes to the appropriate stakeholders;
- Providing feedback on ways for CLTB to prevent employee illness/injury;
- Assuring proper documentation;

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- Acting as a resource in employee/labour relation issues relating to the ESRTW Program;
- Coaching of Management and Team Leaders/Supervisors on return-to-work opportunities;
- Developing and administering contractual agreements associated with return-to-work opportunities; and
- Managing the return of workers when performance issues and other workplace issues impede a safe and timely return to work.

### 2.5.1 Confidentiality

During the course of an employee's involvement with the ESRTW Program, key stakeholders may encounter private and sensitive information which must be maintained as confidential. Reasonable steps will be taken to maintain confidentiality of any personal information received, and it should not be released to anyone except those authorized to receive it, or as authorized by law.

### 2.6 THE HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

The health care provider is the attending physician, physiotherapist, psychologist, psychiatrist, occupational therapist or other member of the rehabilitation team. This professional can provide the necessary information about the employee's expected return to work date, the limitations that may apply upon return to work, and the prognosis of the illness or injury. It is essential that ongoing communication occur between the attending health care provider, employee and Human Resources Advisor. This helps to prevent misunderstandings and prolonged absences.

### 3.0 CASE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

A collaborative approach between the Employee, Team Leader/Supervisor, Union Representative (where applicable) and Human Resources is required to successfully manage employee health issues.

- 3.1 When job performance appears to be affected by health or personal problems, the **Manager/Team Leader/Supervisor** can address them as follows by:
- Identifying corporate expectations for the employee's level of performance;
  - Reviewing the employee's actual performance or conduct;
  - Explaining the consequences of performance deficiencies and attempting to identify any personal or job barriers to corrective action;
  - Referring the employee for help if a health problem is suspected or admitted (see Figure 2); and
  - Referring the employee for EAP help if a personal or work-related problem is suspected or admitted (see Figure 3).
- 3.2 The **Team Leader/Supervisor** should not attempt to diagnose the problem. They do not have the right to know the details of the employee's medical and/or personal problems. However, the **Team Leader/Supervisor/Union Representative** needs to know:

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- If the illness/injury is work-related (to meet WSIB requirements), or not;
- The expected return-to-work date;
- The employee's capabilities and work limitations; and
- The expected duration of any work limitations following the employee's return to work.

**3.3 The employee is obliged to:**

- Provide the employer with a reasonable explanation for absence from work;
- Provide the required information from a physician or other health care provider;
- Seek and sustain a workable return-to-work opportunity; and
- Advise the Team Leader/Supervisor/Union Representative and Human Resources Advisor of the effectiveness of the return-to-work opportunity.

**In accordance with Ontario and Canadian Human Rights Legislation (duty to accommodate) an employee is obliged to maintain open communication with the workplace, to provide adequate medical documentation supporting the absence, and to participate in safe and timely return-to-work opportunities.**

**4.0 DISABILITY CASE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES**

These guidelines apply to the case management by the Human Resources Advisor of employees having difficulty returning to work from medical disability, whether on the Sick Leave plan, LTD, or WSIB. The Human Resources Advisor evaluates illness/injury situations with a view to a safe and timely return to work. This includes assessments of the employee and workplace situation, development of a rehabilitation plan, goal setting, and coordination of the case and return-to-work opportunities.

**4.1 DEVELOPMENT OF A REHABILITATION PLAN**

Once the rehabilitation assessment is complete, the Human Resources Advisor develops a specific rehabilitation plan with the assistance of the Employee, Team Leader/Supervisor, and Union Representative (if applicable), for each employee who can benefit from proactive case management. A variety of tools, as described below, are used in this process.

**4.1.1 Job Analysis**

Using Job Demands Analysis, the physical and psychological demands of the employee's regular job are determined. Comparisons are then made between the job demands and the employee's capabilities, as well as limitations, to determine fitness to work and appropriate early return-to-work options.





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### **4.1.2 Contact with the Attending Health Care Consultant**

The Human Resources Advisor liaises with the attending health care provider(s) to explain the benefits and supports available to employees at CLTB. These supports include:

- The management of the confidentiality of employee health information;
- Job or worksite modifications, such as a temporarily reduced work schedule, change of work duties, physical changes to the worksite, and/or use of specialized tools, or adaptive devices;
- Availability of an EAP to help with personal issues, relationship problems, work stress, and/or any emotional reactions to a disability;
- Coordination with a specialist, when warranted, to obtain timely assessments for the employee; and
- Third party Functional Capacity Evaluation (FCE) with reports going to the attending health care provider if the employee consents to that communication.

### **4.1.2 Employee Education**

Resources, such as the EAP, are used to help the employee understand and deal with their illness/injury situation. The employee must feel a sense of control over life to cope successfully. This is important when trying to encourage a positive attitude towards disability management.

### **4.1.3 Job Modification**

Opportunities for job changes, or reassignment of parts of a job, are examined and applied where possible to assist the employee to safely return to work.

### **4.1.4 Adaptive Devices**

Special clothing, devices, or equipment that allow adaptation of the work to the Employee's limitations are considered where possible.

### **4.1.5 Independent Medical Examination (IME)**

IME's "third party" medical examinations are used to determine the employee's level of disability, the length of disability, and possible recommendations for rehabilitation and return-to-work. The IME is not disciplinary in nature, nor is it intended to determine eligibility for benefit plan coverage.

An IME may be arranged for one or more of the following circumstances:

- To determine the employee's medical status and fitness for work;

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- To determine the length of time the employee may be absent from work in order to allow for adequate replacement resources;
- To determine the employee's work restrictions and/or limitations;
- To assist with the development of a rehabilitation strategy, if necessary;
- To ensure that the employee can return to work safely and productively;
- If the disabling condition is not usually "totally disabling";
- If the actual or estimated period of disability is longer than usual for the disabling condition;
- If there is no definitive diagnosis;
- If the return-to-work date cannot be provided by the physician, or is shown as "unknown" or "indefinite"; and/or
- To obtain a second medical opinion.

Upon receipt of the completed IME, the Human Resources Advisor notifies the Team Leader/Supervisor if the employee is fit to return to work and the anticipated date of return. CLTB pays for any costs associated with this type of health assessment. (Please note: This differs from the cost of medicals required for insurance purposes.)

### **4.2 GOAL SETTING**

Specific goals with time frames are developed by the Human Resources Advisor, Employee and the Team Leader/Supervisor and communicated to the team of which the employee is the key player. Based on these goals, an action plan that can be used to document the rehabilitation goal is to be developed.

### **4.3 CASE COORDINATION**

The Human Resources Advisor coordinates the rehabilitation and return-to-work plans with all the relevant stakeholders.

## **5.0 RETURN TO WORK PLAN**

### **5.1 PURPOSE OF RETURN-TO-WORK PLAN**

- 5.1.1 Return-to-work opportunities are intended to assist employees who are recovering from an illness/injury to safely return to the workplace and ultimately to regular duties prior to the injury/illness.
- 5.1.2 To assist in an employee's return to work, CLTB /Union/Employees shall make every effort to accommodate the recovering employee.
- 5.1.3 The purpose of this policy is to facilitate the safe and timely return of an ill/injured employee to productive work in a manner that is mutually beneficial to the employee and to CLTB.

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5.1.4 Through thoughtful implementation of this policy, CLTB believes that supporting recovering employees to return to work will be positively viewed by the Employee, Team Leader/Supervisor/Union and fellow employees, and will help to promote positive employee morale.

### 5.2 SCOPE OF THE RETURN-TO-WORK PLAN

5.2.1 This program is available to employees who are absent for reasons of illness/ injury, regardless of the nature of the illness or injury (STD, LTD, or WSIB).

5.2.2 Return-to-work includes modified work and alternate work opportunities.

5.2.3 **Modified work is interim work** offered to recovering employees, or those experiencing a diminished capacity, when it is medically foreseen that the employee will return to their own occupation. It includes:

- Changing existing "own" occupation conditions (hours/duties/responsibilities);
- Providing transitional work;
- Providing different duties within another occupation/worksites;
- Providing a training opportunity; and
- All, or any combination of the above.

In terms of budgeting for modified work, the home department is accountable for all wage and accommodation costs. In terms of staffing, temporary back filling is a departmental issue.

5.2.5 A return-to-work plan may include a return to:

- The employee's own job with reduced hours;
- A portion of the employee's own job duties with full-time or part-time hours;
- A new job outside of CLTB on a full-time or part-time basis.

### 5.3 PRINCIPLES OF THE EARLY AND SAFE RETURN-TO-WORK PLAN

Management and Union (if applicable) believe that early return to work is in the best interest of the ill/injured employee and CLTB. The employee benefits from having meaningful employment, gradual work conditioning, and the social supports associated with being at work.

CLTB is able to mitigate the costs associated with lost production, hiring and training replacement workers, and re-scheduling of other workers. Supporting the recovering employee to return to productive work minimizes the direct and indirect costs associated with disability. CLTB, its Management, Employees, and Union believe that each employee, regardless of the reason for the absence, has abilities that can be of value to CLTB. This means focusing on the person's capabilities and the contributions that he/she can make to the workplace.

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CLTB will provide return-to-work opportunities for the recovering employee. The return-to-work plan will be meaningful and match the employee's capabilities with the demands of the work. Modifications will consider the type of work to be performed and the hours to be worked.

5.3.1 Early intervention is critical to achieving a positive return-to-work experience. It can:

- Assist the employee to receive appropriate and timely care;
- Help with the physical, social, psychological, vocational and financial implications of illness/injury;
- Increase the likelihood of successful rehabilitation;
- Facilitate the process of coping and adjustment for the employee, family and work group;
- Promote a safe, timely and successful return to work; and
- Be cost-effective for the employee, family and employer.

5.3.2 A return-to-work plan must recognize the employee's diminished capability and not compromise the employee's recovery or safety. Employees should consult with the Human Resources Advisor and their physician if uncertain as to the advisability of the proposed return-to-work plan.

5.3.3 A return-to-work plan must ensure that workplace safety is not compromised.

5.3.4 Employee information with regard to individual health issues remains confidential with the Human Resources Advisor. The employee's Team Leader/Supervisor and Union Representative (when applicable), are provided with the required information for developing, implementing, and assessing an appropriate return-to-work placement without breaching this confidentiality.

5.3.5 **The return-to-work plan is not a disciplinary tool.** Performance issues are to be resolved through the appropriate administrative processes and the collective agreement.

### 5.3.6 Compensation

- a) Employees who are on a modified work plan will be paid at no less than their usual classified rate, or according to the WSIB/LTD payment schedules, whichever is applicable.
- b) Alternate work compensation will be determined on a case-by-case basis. After review by the stakeholders, an attempt will be made to place the worker in a position that closely resembles the pre-disability job.

## 5.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE EARLY AND SAFE RETURN-TO-WORK PLAN

A return-to-work plan is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- Ensure fair and consistent treatment for all employees who are returning to work;



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- Promote shared responsibility for effective return-to-work plans and placements among Team Leaders/Supervisors, Union Representatives, ill/injured Employees and the Human Resources Advisor;
- Provide coordinated claims and case management services for the ill/injured employee; and
- Mitigate medical absence associated with Sick Leave, WSIB and LTD claims.

### **5.5 EARLY INTERVENTION**

- 5.5.1 For a non-occupational illness/injury or a diminished capacity, the Team Leader/Supervisor and employee may arrange modified work for the period of that absence or diminished capacity. When, or if, the absence or diminished capacity is expected to last more than 5 days, the Team Leader/Supervisor will contact the Human Resources Advisor who will work with the employee to establish rehabilitation and return-to-work plans.
- 5.5.2 For an occupational illness/injury requiring medical aid or lost time, the Team Leader/Supervisor will advise the employee to contact the Human Resources Advisor to fill out the WSIB forms. The Team Leader/Supervisor will immediately notify the Human Resources Advisor and jointly participate with the Human Resources Advisor to complete the WSIB Employer's Report. The Human Resources Advisor will oversee the completion of the relevant WSIB forms, and notify the Joint Health & Safety Committee of any claims.
- 5.5.3 The Human Resources Advisor will determine if further medical information is required.
- 5.5.4 The ill/injured employee may be requested to sign a consent form authorizing CLTB to obtain additional relevant information.
- 5.5.5 The Human Resources Advisor will facilitate the preparation of a return-to-work plan by working with the Employee, Team Leader/Supervisor and Union Representative, if applicable, to assess any options for their consideration.

### **5.6 APPROVAL OF THE RETURN-TO-WORK PLAN**

Return-to-work plans shall provide goal-oriented, meaningful work that benefits both the employee CLTB.

The primary responsibility for accepting a return-to-work plan, as per departmental guidelines, lies with the Employee, Team Leader/Supervisor, Union Representative (if applicable), and Human Resources. When the return-to-work plan extends beyond the boundaries of the home department, the Supports and Services Coordinators would be consulted to determine if suitable employment can be obtained in another department.



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The development of a suitable accommodation plan involves extensive consultation and planning between the Employee, Team Leader/Supervisor, Union Representative (if applicable), and the Human Resources Advisor. At this point, if the employee is deemed fit to undertake a suitable return-to-work plan designed to accommodate their medical limitations, but chooses not to participate, they may face disciplinary action by CLTB, up to and including dismissal.

### **6.0 RELATED SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

6.1 Community Living Thunder Bay and employees administer a range of policies and employee benefit plans intended to reduce the negative impacts that an illness or injury can have for an employee and the family. These policies and benefits include:

- Sick Leave;
- LTD insurance;
- Benefits plan continuance (Ontario Health Care, dental, extended health, life insurance, etc.);
- Vacation;
- EAP; and
- Collective agreement, where applicable.

Further information on the specific services and eligibility requirements for these benefits are described in CLTB's Employee Benefit Handbook, and the collective agreement.

6.2 An employee participating in a return-to-work plan who becomes ill/injured as a result of an unrelated illness/injury can access their sick bank/WSIB/LTD, etc., as appropriate.

Team Leaders/Supervisors should consult with the Human Resources Advisor before approving vacation for employees on a return-to-work plan. This is to ensure that the vacation does not disrupt, or delay, the planned rehabilitation process.

Employees participating in a return-to-work plan may be afforded special consideration for vacation carry-over beyond the terms of the Vacation Policy.

Employees taking vacation during a return-to-work plan in the Sick Leave period, use up their vacation entitlement based on the number of hours on a return-to-work plan immediately prior to the vacation's commencement. Vacation is used for the time employees could work but instead wish to take vacation time.

6.3 Prior to the end of the Sick Leave benefits, the employee receives a package of information explaining the LTD program and application process. The LTD eligibility date and commencement of the "own" job provision of the LTD plan occurs after an initial waiting period from the initial date of disability as determined by the current LTD plan.

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When a return-to-work plan has been undertaken, eligibility for LTD remains unchanged. However, recognition that rehabilitation is in progress, must be sought from the third party insurer.

These events may be delayed, but occur no later than twelve (12) months from the initial date of disability.

- 6.4 The third party insurer assesses the return-to-work plan set up in the LTD period for the employee to determine its acceptability as vocational rehabilitative employment. If changes are required, the third party insurer works with the Human Resources Advisor to enhance the rehabilitation plan.

### 7.0 PROGRAM EVALUATION

The benefits that can be realized by an Early and Safe Return to Work Program are:

- Support for the ill/injured employee and family;
- Employee satisfaction;
- Reduction in lost time hours;
- A decline in Sick Leave and WSIB claims costs, and
- Fewer LTD claims.

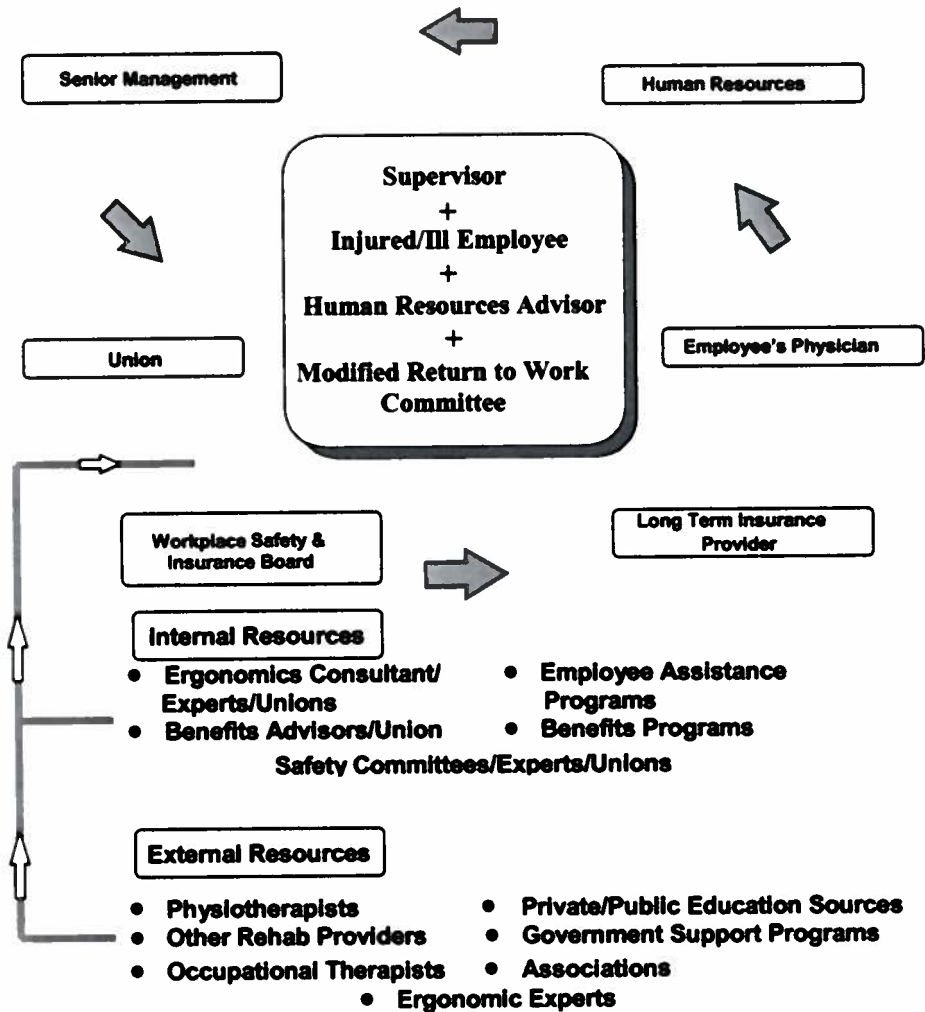
Additionally, the information gathered from the ESRTW Program can help to identify emerging problems or developing trends that warrant further investigation. It allows for a focused approach to illness/injury prevention.

To measure the productivity and effectiveness of the ESRTW Program, data is to be collected and documented. The process of data collection provides evidence of the hidden costs of disability; and the added costs of lost productivity, staff replacement, and retraining. Analyzing the data provides a measure of the ESRTW Program's cost effectiveness, which in turn impacts the organization's "bottom line." Data collection and analysis also provides documentation of compliance with duty to accommodate legislation, and supports the legal concept of "due diligence."

The evaluation process occurs at many levels. At the **individual case level**, the process and results are continually reviewed throughout the course of the disability, and improvements sought. At the **program level**, program results, costs, system concerns, and recommendations are analyzed and reported periodically to local management while maintaining confidentiality of individual information. At the **process level**, internal and external auditing of the ESRTW Program is undertaken.

**Figure 1**

**Early & Safe Return to Work Program**





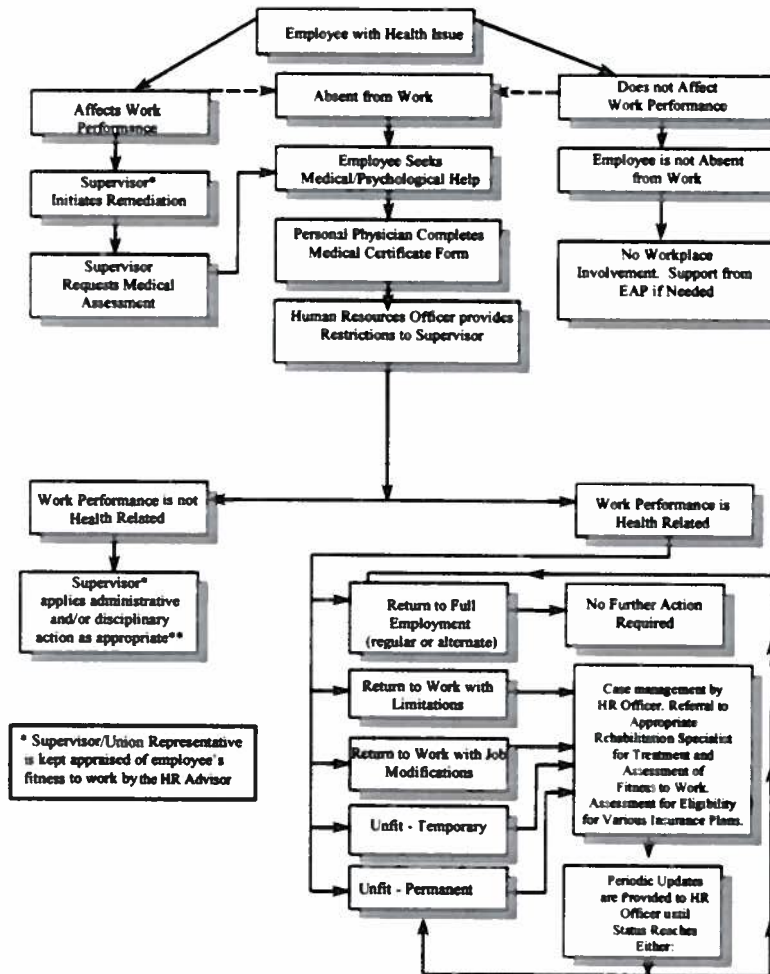
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**Figure 2**

**COMMUNITY LIVING THUNDER BAY  
MANAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEES WITH HEALTH ISSUES**



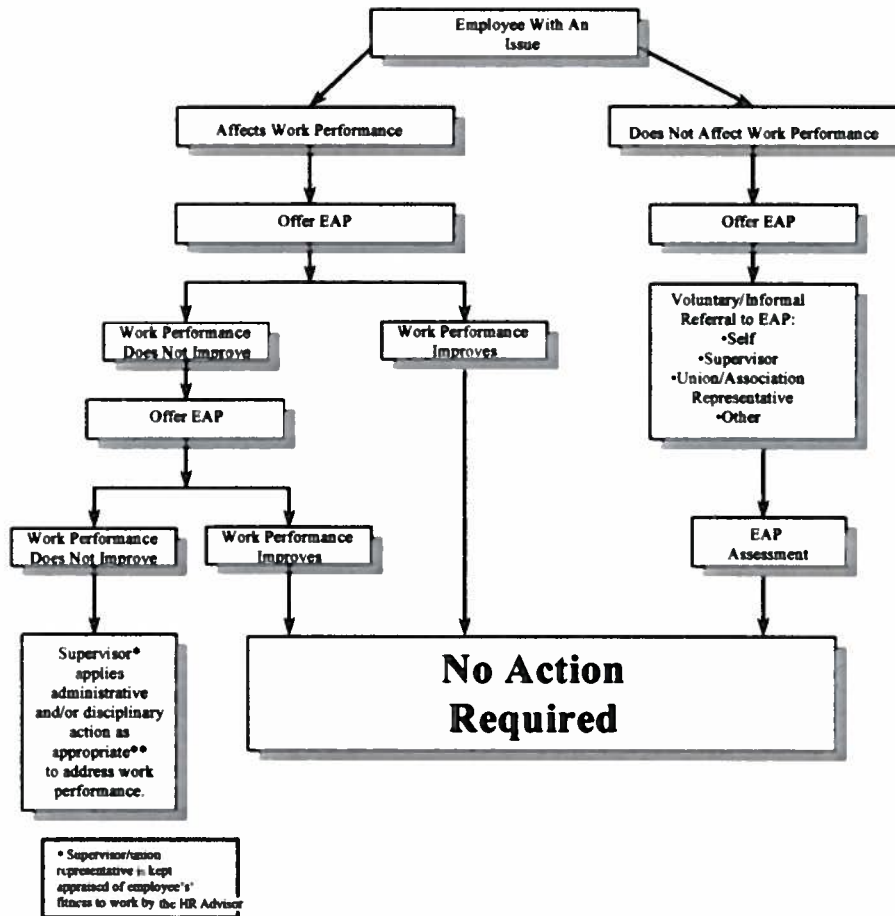
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**Figure 3**

**COMMUNITY LIVING THUNDER BAY  
EMPLOYEE AND FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EFAP)**



NOTE: 1) Employee rejects EAP recommendations, continue with administrative and/or disciplinary action, as appropriate