

Summary of changes – Guidelines for workplace return to work programs



Context

The new Guidelines for workplace RTW programs 2019 take effect from 29 November 2019 and replace all earlier versions of the Guidelines. The Guidelines contain information and requirements that employers in NSW are required to meet.

The Guidelines previously issued by SIRA in May 2017 have undergone a small scale review to remove the transition clause that gave employers a two-year period to transition their arrangements to align with the Guidelines. This transition period ceased in May 2019.

The Guidelines have also been updated to add requirements as a result of changes to workers compensation legislation that came into effect 1 January 2019, update terminology, make corrections and ensure information is aligned with other legislation.

The table below contains the change made to the guidelines and reason for making the change.

Table 1 – Summary of changes

Change	Page number	Reason for the change
Made content more succinct for employers	3	Reflect Customer Service approach
Removal of transition clause and provisions		Cessation of the transition period
Re-wording regarding SafeWork NSW Inspectors	5	Updated information
Information about how to display or notify a RTW program	10- 11	Legislation and regulation changes
Amended wording re authorisation of nominated treating doctor (NTD) to exchange information	11, 12	Ensure accuracy and differentiate between a working providing authorisation of NTD to exchange information and a worker's provision of consent for release and exchange of information with other parties
Amended wording re dismissal	16	Ensure accuracy and consistency with other SIRA materials
New section – provision of information to workers	21	Legislative changes – section 231 of the 1998 Act

Change	Page number	Reason for the change
Addition of page numbers to checklist	22-24	Increase usefulness of the checklist
Amendments to requesting consent section and sample consent form	24-28	Ensure accuracy and consistency
General changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of terminology from “suitable employment” to “suitable work”; “injured worker” to “worker”, “appoint” to “nominate” for Category 2 employers • Updating of references to Acts, Regulations and Guidelines 	Throughout	Ensure accuracy and reflect terminology changes