Vocational rehabilitation: Helping workers get back to work

NEW YORK STATE | Workers' Compensation Board

The NYS Workers' Compensation Board (Board) has vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRCs) who provide free assistance to injured workers with physical disabilities. Our counselors help these injured workers get the help they need to become more independent and return to work.

While the majority of injured workers fully heal and return to their same job once cleared by their health care provider, some may have medical restrictions or other situations that affect their return to work. They may require alternate or light duties at work as they continue to heal or to accommodate new medical restrictions. Some injured workers need training and assistance to find a different job altogether. We can help!

The Board's team of highly qualified and skilled VRCs:

- Help search and apply for jobs.
- Coordinate job/vocational training.
- Offer referrals to other vocational support services.
- Provide general assistance to return to work or stay at work.
- Provide guidance regarding labor market attachment and reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Serve as a resource regarding disability, employment, and workforce development.
- Partner with the Board's licensed master social workers to address any mental health issues that may affect an injured worker's successful return to work.

For more information, visit **wcb.ny.gov/vocrehab**, email **VocRehab@wcb.ny.gov**, or contact the Board at **(212) 866-2425** and ask for "vocational rehabilitation assistance."

Things to know if you have a work-related injury or illness:
Stay in contact with your employer about options for returning to work.
Work with your health care provider to get clearance to work — whether you are able to fully return to the job, or if you are able to work with defined restrictions.
Communicate your medical restrictions to your employer for duty options within your limitations.
If you have a disability, you may request a reasonable accommodation from your employer so you can get back to work.
If you return to work at lower pay due to your work-related injury, you can receive benefits to make up for the difference.
Medical care for your work-related injury is a lifetime benefit.
If you are able to work but cannot return to your job, you must search for work within your restrictions.
Employers are not required to hold your job. Stay in contact with your employer about your job status.
You may be entitled to unpaid leave through the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).
Discrimination is always prohibited!
You may have protections under the Americans with Disabilities Act — speak with a vocational rehabilitation counselor to learn more.

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CRISIS SUPPORT: Are you in crisis, experiencing emotional distress, or worried about someone you know? Call or **text 988** or chat at **988lifeline.org**. These resources are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.