

Policy on Disability Management

Approved October 17, 2001

The Board of Trustees of the IWA – Forest Industry Long Term Disability Plan has determined that it is desirable for the Plan to assist in, and encourage, employees and employers to develop Disability Management Programs.

Mandate or Purpose

The primary form of disability management systems at the local level will be Disability Management Committees.

The mandate or purpose of the Disability Management Committees will be “to enable injured or sick workers to maintain employment at the job site they are from”.

Benefits

The benefits of a good disability management system are anticipated to be:

Short Term: reduced claims on LTD; more injured employees back at their own worksite

Medium Term: reduced STD, WI and local disability management costs for employers

Long Term: a reduction in long-term claims; and strengthening of the financial position of the LTD Plan.

Plan’s Support for Disability Management Systems

The Plan will support the implementation of disability management systems or the enhancement of existing disability management systems through the following means:

- ! education and information;
- ! expertise;
- ! model or guidelines for effective systems;
- ! subject to Board approval, funding of specific activities related to the establishment or operation of disability management systems (this does NOT include payments related to specific cases) NOTE: In the foreseeable future (2 to 3 years) the Plan will not provide monetary incentives to companies to implement disability management systems nor financial rewards for having done so.

Authority of Disability Management Committees

Disability Management Committees will be established as a result of agreements reached between local unions and management.

The mandate (policy), the composition and authority (all consistent with this policy) of this Committee will be defined by a written agreement.

Disability Management Committees will be standing committees.

The agreements to establish a Disability Management Committee are expected to include an “escape clause” or to be clearly defined as a non-grievable. For instance, the failure of a Committee to come to an agreement on the choice of physician is not expected to be a grievable issue.

Guidelines or Rules for Disability Management Committees

Criteria for support of Disability Management Committees by the Plan include (but are not limited to):

- ! The committees must be joint (minimum 1 company and 1 union representative);
- ! There must be site-specific involvement (disability management requires local buy-in);
- ! The committees must operate within the collective agreement and any deviations from the collective agreement must be agreed to by the Company and the Local Union;
- ! Participation in the disability management process by the individual is voluntary (that is, committees will work with people who want to participate and make a difference in their lives);
- ! There will be early intervention designed to maintain continuous work by the individual.

Medical Opinion to Disability Management Committees

- ! When a medical opinion is required, the Disability Management Committee will jointly choose a doctor to advise the Committee and the Committee will rely on that one doctor’s opinion;
- ! A doctor must be familiar with both the patient and the job site;
- ! The doctor would be expected to take into account the opinions of other physicians involved in the case, such as specialists;

Policy on Disability Management

- ! The role of the doctor is to help in the process of getting the person back to work. The opinion of the doctor is used to **guide** the Committee. The Committee is not bound by the doctor's views. The details of the return-to-work program will be determined by the Committee;
- ! It is not the role of the physician to determine disability;
- ! The doctor works **for** the Committee, not for the patient. The process is voluntary for the employee. If the employee does not like the doctor or his or her opinion, then the employee may not participate;
- ! Medical information provided by the physician is confidential to the Committee.

LTD Plan Administration

The Administration shall report at each Board meeting on activities planned, developed and undertaken in relation to Disability Management Systems.

All requests for funding from Disability Management Committees require Board approval.