

Work Comp Insights

Pelnik Insurance - Your Workers' Compensation Partner

A Supervisor's Role in Workers' Compensation

Supervisors play an essential role in ensuring a company's efficiency and success. They are responsible for handling the everyday situations that help a business remain functional. Further, supervisors are also an [integral part](#) of workplace safety programs. Such programs utilize risk management techniques to keep employees safe on the job, thus reducing workers' compensation costs.

Employers who are not incorporating their supervisors within their workers' compensation programs are missing out on a valuable opportunity. After all, supervisors can help prevent employee injuries and subsequent workers' compensation claims from occurring by promoting workplace safety programs, as well as support claims in action by assisting employees upon their return to work following an injury.

This guidance outlines ways that supervisors can help proactively limit workers' compensation claims and keep the claim process running smoothly when an employee comes back to work after getting injured.

Proactive Claim Prevention Methods

Supervisors spend a significant amount of time with employees. Although supervisors have their own job tasks to complete, they should always

have safety on their mind. Supervisors are some of the most influential people within a company when it comes to promoting a positive safety culture.

Most employees will follow the example set by their supervisors. That is, if a supervisor is showing a disregard for safety in the workplace, then there's a high likelihood that other employees will start displaying those same behaviors. As such, it is important that supervisors show their employees how important safety is. They can do so by incorporating safety initiatives within their everyday routines.

Specifically, supervisors should call out employees' poor workplace behavior and provide them with feedback on how to do a job correctly and safely. In doing this, supervisors can promote and display a safe work environment, which will eventually trickle down to employees—instilling a positive and safe work culture across the company.

Supervisors should take note of any unsafe behaviors that employees are exhibiting and use these instances as training opportunities. Supervisors can discuss these behaviors with employees right as they occur, or use them as topics for daily toolbox talks.



A positive safety culture in the workplace has been proven to reduce the risk of employee injuries. According to the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#), studies have shown that company engagement in safety programs reduces injury and illness rates significantly.

Supervisors who participate in and encourage employees to practice safe work habits will help limit instances of injury and illness, leading to a reduction in workers' compensation claims and related costs. That being said, it is important for employers to hire supervisors who believe in and promote a safe work environment. In addition, employers should train their supervisors in safety management and make it a part of every employee's performance evaluation.

Supporting Claims in Action

Although employees typically consult their employer or the HR department for a workers' compensation claim (depending on how large the company is), supervisors can play an important role in the investigation of a claim and in an injured employee's experience when they return to work.

Employers should use supervisors to help in the investigation of a workers' compensation claim. Supervisors understand each employee's job task and are able to break down the sequence of events enough to understand what the employee was doing or should not have been doing when the injury occurred. Supervisors can be vital to understanding how an injury occurred, what the cause of the injury was and how to mitigate any more issues moving forward.

Supervisors understand the ins and outs of which tasks need to be completed and usually have a good gauge of the abilities required for different job roles. Supervisors can help employers or HR leaders determine adequate transitional tasks for an employee to get them back to work after an injury. In particular,

supervisors can be a great resource for finding light-duty work for a returning employee.

Supervisors can also help with monitoring employees when they return to work. A supervisor should have daily communication with the returning employee in order to identify any issues that may arise (e.g., instances of pain or discomfort while performing job tasks). From there, these issues can be rectified, preventing the returning employee from stepping backward in their recovery process or experiencing new injuries. Having supervisors engage in such monitoring protocols can ensure injured employees properly recover and successfully transition back into their roles, keeping workers' compensation claims from becoming more severe and—subsequently—expensive.

Another benefit of having supervisors work closely with employees who are returning to work post-injury is that doing so provides such employees with a sense of care from their employer. If supervisors are regularly checking in on their recovering employees to confirm that things are going well, these employees will feel as though their employer is genuinely concerned about their recovery. Happy, supported employees tend to enjoy work and resume their original job roles quicker than those who have negative experiences with workers' compensation claims.

Overall, having supervisors be involved with company safety programs and support employees throughout the return-to-work process are cost-effective ways to reduce workers' compensation claims and related costs. Supervisors are the eyes and ears of a company, and involving them in these areas can only benefit the company—promoting efficient operations, a positive work culture and a successful workers' compensation program.

Contact us today to discuss all of your workers' compensation needs.

