

SPATEQ

Support Tool for Temporary
Assignment Practices in Québec
Companies

An optimal temporary
assignment means:

Tasks that:

Are **similar to** the injured employee's **regular work**

- With the same work team,
- At the same workplace,
- On the same work schedule;

Focus on the injured employee's **capacities**

- That make use of his or her expertise and skills,
- That he or she can apply autonomously or with simple, easily implemented means of support;

Are **chosen in collaboration** with the injured
employee; and

Are **productive** for the company.

Advantages:

For the employer, which:

Benefits from the injured employee's skills
and experience,

Maintains the company's productivity,

Avoids the costs of recruiting and training a
new employee,

Is better able to control the amounts of the
contributions paid to the CNESST,

Avoids the cost of replacing the injured
employee,

Accelerates his or her return to regular work;

For the employee, who:

Thus has a lower risk of suffering the negative
physical, psychological and social effects of
prolonged sick leave,

Maintains a positive "worker identity" despite
his or her partial disability,

Preserves his or her usual "worker habits":
schedule, co-workers, workplace, etc.,

Develops his or her capacities in order to
resume his or her regular work tasks.

How to do this? Actions to take at three different times:

1

Actions that foster an occupational health and safety culture within the company

At all times

The company's senior management:

- adopts a policy regarding sustainable return to work and including a temporary assignment measure,
- informs all stakeholders (employees, supervisors, union representatives, managers, etc.) of this policy,
- ensures that the policy is applied throughout the company,
- supports and backs up those responsible for implementing the temporary assignment measure,
- is flexible and open to solutions that support the temporary assignment measure,
- avoids contesting/going the legal route with claims filed by injured employees.

Those responsible for implementing the temporary assignment measure:

- receive basic training on occupational injuries and ergonomics,
- always communicate with employees with respect and empathy,
- ensure fairness among employees when implementing temporary assignments.

2

Actions that facilitate implementation of temporary assignments

At the time of an occupational injury

As soon as an employee is injured:

- a person responsible for implementing a temporary assignment is identified,
- the person responsible for the temporary assignment contacts the employee and makes sure he or she has the necessary documents to give to the physician (letter from senior management informing the physician of the company's policy regarding sustainable return to work, and a temporary assignment form).

Once the temporary assignment has been authorized by the attending physician, the person responsible for implementing the temporary assignment and the employee:

- work together to identify the tasks to be performed
 - these tasks should be as similar as possible to the employee's regular work tasks in order to make use of his or her experience and expertise,
 - they should focus on using the employee's capacities, despite his or her partial disability,
- work together to identify simple and effective means that will be implemented to support the employee in performing the temporary assignment tasks,
- discuss what they see as potentially facilitating or hindering the success of the temporary assignment.

Once the temporary assignment has been identified, the person responsible:

- assesses the impact of the temporary assignment on the work team,
- if need be, suggests to management possible solutions to ensure that co-workers are not adversely affected by the temporary assignment: adding extra workers, redistributing tasks among the team members, etc.,
- informs co-workers of the tasks that will be performed by the employee on the temporary assignment and of the implications in terms of work organization.

3

Actions that ensure follow-up

During the temporary assignment

➤ **The person responsible for the temporary assignment and the employee:**

- meet frequently and communicate constructively and openly,
- review the tasks and adapt them to the employee's capacities to allow a gradual progression toward a return to regular work tasks,
- ensure that the tasks are as similar as possible to the employee's regular work so as to make use of his or her experience and expertise,
- re-assess the means implemented to support performance of the temporary assignment tasks,
- discuss what facilitates or hinders performance of the temporary assignment tasks.

➤ **The person responsible for the temporary assignment:**

- informs senior management of the employee's progress during the temporary assignment ,
- re-assesses the impact of the temporary assignment on the work team, on a regular basis,
- suggests, if need be, means to ensure that co-workers are not adversely affected by the temporary assignment: adding extra workers, redistributing tasks among the team members, etc.,
- calls in professional resources (ergonomist, occupational therapist, etc.) when the temporary assignment does not enable the employee to progress toward a return to regular work,
- continually informs co-workers of the tasks that will be performed by the worker on the temporary assignment and of the implications in terms of work organization,
- seeks co-workers' support and cooperation during the temporary assignment process.