







# National principles for communicating workers' compensation information to workers

## National communication principles

The following principles should be considered when developing communication for workers about workers' compensation:

-  **RELEVANT**  
Provide information that is important to workers. Communication should be both targeted and tailored for workers.
-  **CLEAR**  
Use plain and simple language that is culturally appropriate.
-  **TRUSTED**  
Ensure communication is coming from the most appropriate source. Stakeholders should collaborate to communicate effectively and avoid duplication.
-  **TIMELY**  
Ensure workers receive the right information at the right time.
-  **ACCESSIBLE**  
Information should be easy to access. Seek to communicate information in a variety of formats and via channels preferred by workers.
-  **EMPOWERING**  
Where possible use positive, supportive and empathetic language when communicating directly with workers.



These principles outline a set of considerations for effectively communicating with workers about workers' compensation.

The principles cover content, delivery and tone of communication and are intended to be used by anyone involved in preparing communication about workers' compensation, for example communication professionals, employers, healthcare professionals and workers' compensation authorities.

The communication principles are an initiative of Safe Work Australia's [National Return to Work Strategy 2020-2030](#) and deliver on a recommendation from Safe Work Australia's research into [Australian workers' understanding of workers' compensation systems and their communication preferences](#).

## Communication principles summary



### RELEVANT

Provide information that is important to workers. Communication should be both targeted and tailored for workers.

Communication should target its audience and be tailored to their needs. Where possible, use available evidence such as data or insights from the targeted audience to inform and tailor the messaging. Communication should also provide information that is most important to workers and that is relevant to workers at different stages of the workers' compensation process. This includes helping workers to understand what workers' compensation is, whether they are covered, how to claim, and the return to work process. Providing information that is not directly relevant to the worker might be confusing or overwhelming. Communication should also direct them where to go for more information.



### CLEAR

Use plain and simple language that is culturally appropriate.

Communication should use plain and simple language so it can be understood by workers of all backgrounds, reading abilities, and those with varying levels of understanding about workers' compensation. Where possible, communication should avoid complex language and jargon or seek to define key terms for the reader. Have a clear call to action (for example call this number, talk to your manager, see your doctor).

Communication also needs to use language that is culturally appropriate and respectful. Consider translating communication material for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) workers when it is identified that there is benefit to the audience. There should also be culturally appropriate strategies for the dissemination of translated information about workers' compensation.



### TRUSTED

Ensure communication is coming from the most appropriate source. Stakeholders should collaborate to communicate effectively and avoid duplication.

When communicating with workers, ensure that the information is coming from the most appropriate source. In a workers' compensation setting, this may be the worker's employer, case manager, healthcare professional or supervisor. Collaborate with workers' compensation partners (such as allied health professionals or case managers) to ensure communication is effective and to reduce duplication of communication.

## Communication principles summary



### TIMELY

Ensure workers receive the right information at the right time.

Ideally, communication with workers provides them with the right information at the right time, with prompts to access further information if they want to know more. Workers should not be expected to navigate large amounts of information to find information relevant to their stage of the workers' compensation process. In a workers' compensation setting, it's also important to communicate the right information early to achieve the best possible outcome for the worker.



### ACCESSIBLE

Information should be easy to access. Seek to communicate information in a variety of formats and via channels preferred by workers.

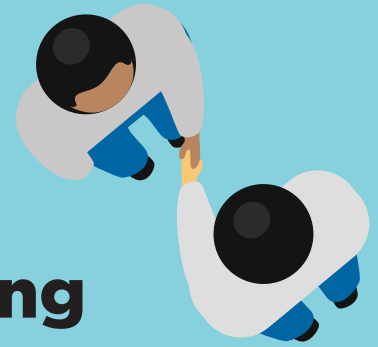
Communication should be provided to workers in a variety of formats and channels preferred by workers, such as posters or booklets in the workplace, internal organisational newsletters or the FAQ section of a website. While it's important to make general information about workers' compensation available online, workers should have a choice between digital or physical options for direct communication. Some workers may not have access to digital communication or may lack the digital literacy to navigate complicated websites, so information should be easy to access. Information should be shared in a transparent way so that all stakeholders are informed. Where relevant, promote the Translating and Interpreting Service (131 450) or the National Relay Service.



### EMPOWERING

Where possible use positive, supportive and empathetic language when communicating directly with workers.

Where possible, communication should use a positive, supportive and empathetic tone, with a focus on getting the worker better and back to work safely. Most workers who seek information about workers' compensation have experienced an injury or illness and may be suffering pain or trauma. Explaining processes in a supportive way that does not presume fault or blame is beneficial, so the workers' compensation process does not seem arbitrary or punitive. Being clear about further actions a worker can take and options available to them will empower the worker to participate in the process. Using active voice and personal pronouns (we, us, you) where relevant can help to engage workers. Inviting or facilitating feedback on communications materials, particularly that demonstrates if the communication was informative and changed behaviour, can empower workers and improve future communication effectiveness.



# Checklist for communicating workers' compensation information to workers

**This checklist is a practical tool to help you apply the national principles when developing communications for workers about workers' compensation.**

These questions can help ensure you are communicating effectively by considering the communication from a worker's perspective.

## Have I made it useful?

- Is this the information they need most?
- Is it clear why a worker needs this information?
- Are there directions for further information or next steps?

## Have I been clear?

- Have I used plain and simple language?
- Have I been concise and consistent?
- Have key concepts been explained clearly from the worker's perspective?
- Is the communication culturally appropriate?
- Have I been clear about actions they can take or options available to them?

## Am I creating trust?

- Am I the right person to be sending this information?
- Can I check if any other party has provided similar or conflicting information?
- Have I disclosed who else has received this information?

## Is this the right time?

- Is this the information they need right now?
- Is it clear why I am communicating this information at this stage?
- Is the worker being provided sufficient time to consider the information and how it may impact them?

## Is this going to be useable for the worker?

- Is the information easy for a worker to access (and revisit if required)?
- Are digital and non-digital options available?
- Is this being provided in the format they want?

## Does this support the worker?

- Is the communication positive and helpful in tone?
- Have I explained the process in a supportive way?
- Have I given the opportunity for feedback?