



A LONG ROAD TO RECOVERY

Madam Zaleha's vibrant personality and energy make her perfect for her role as a Resident Care Associate at the Salvation Army. Her regular work activities involve taking care of the residents, going on excursions and participating in outdoor recreational activities with the residents.

All this changed on 31 December 2017. During a routine fire drill at work, she slipped and fell. The fall caused a fracture of her right hip and she immediately felt the pain when she tried to get up. Her road to recovery was equally painful — Madam Zaleha underwent hip surgery and subsequently went through nine months of rehabilitation at the hospital.

Thankfully, Madam Zaleha found a friend in her occupational therapist — who is also a coordinator for the Return To Work (RTW) programme at Tan Tock Seng Hospital, where she sought treatment after her surgery.

An initiative by the Ministry of Manpower and Workplace Safety and Health Council, the RTW programme helps workers who suffer from traumatic work injuries and work-related musculoskeletal injuries to make a smooth transition back into their workplaces. The programme provides early intervention to help injured workers retain their long-term employability and continue to be productive in their jobs. The RTW programme is available in seven public hospitals in Singapore.

The RTW coordinator worked with Madam Zaleha and other healthcare professionals in setting goals to help Madam Zaleha regain her mobility and carry out daily activities at home. At the same time, the coordinator had constant discussions with Madam Zaleha's doctor and employers on how she could get back to work safely, proposing readjustments to her work duties. When Madam Zaleha returned to work in November 2018, she was given light administrative duties and exempted from outdoor physical activities with the residents.

Despite the changes in her work duties, Madam Zaleha still works selflessly to take care of the residents' well-being. She teaches the residents arts and crafts, as well as gardening, and keeps a watchful eye on them while they engage in outdoor activities.

Today, Madam Zaleha is still on her road to recovery but is slowly gaining more self-confidence. She credits the RTW programme for her progress and for granting her a smooth transition back to a fulfilling life at work. She is very appreciative of the programme and how it can help to boost workers' spirits, giving them assurance on returning to work after an injury.

She shares this advice with fellow workers, "Be mindful of your environment and take extra measures to ensure safety at all times. Do not be afraid to approach your supervisor on any issues relating to your safety and health at work."



245*
injured workers
have participated in the RTW
programme since 1 Nov 2017.

**As of Jan 2019*

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STAND a chance to win!

You can take a photo or write to us about what workplace safety and health means to you. Check out the winning letter on page 4.

THE RETURN TO WORK (RTW) JOURNEY

Helping Workers Return to Work after Injury

1 Injured worker signs up for RTW programme with Hospital RTW Coordinator



2 Coordinator will introduce RTW programme and seek support from employer to facilitate worker's return to work.



4 Doctor will review worker's ability to return to work



3 Coordinator will find out worker's job scope and duties



5 Supervisor will review with Coordinator on potential job changes to help worker return to work safely



6 Coordinator to check on worker's recovery



7 Worker returns to work and update Coordinator on progress where needed



8 Worker discharged from RTW programme



Approach your doctor if you need help. To find out the list of participating hospitals, visit www.wshc.sg/returntowork

HAPPY TO BE BACK AT WORK

Mr Peh Chee Beng is a cleaner with Summer Pond & Landscaping Pte Ltd. In January 2018, Mr Peh's big toe was crushed by a drain cover. There was a deep cut diagonally across his toe and he suffered a fracture. After going through surgery and physiotherapy at Tan Tock Seng Hospital, his doctor recommended him to undergo the Return To Work (RTW) programme.

As part of the RTW programme, the RTW coordinator conducted a workplace visit with Mr Peh and his supervisor. During the visit, the coordinator went through Mr Peh's work environment and identified potential safety risks. Mr Peh was given modified work duties, advice on correct body postures and wore proper footwear. Mr Peh returned to work six weeks after his injury.

"The RTW programme played an important part in my recovery journey. The RTW coordinator helped me greatly by checking with my doctor on my condition, liaising with my employer on my job scope, (and) identifying the potential risks or barriers for me to return to work. With these interventions, I was assigned light duties when I first went back to work. My supervisor was supportive and urged me to pace out my work, so that I have sufficient breaks throughout my shift. I'm happy to be able to go back to my job and continue working after I have recovered," shared Mr Peh.



Case Study 1

Nurse Fell While Helping Patient

WHAT HAPPENED?

A nurse fell and fractured her left ankle when she was helping a patient in the bathroom to pull the commode chair. The nurse underwent surgery and had to wear a long walker boot to help her foot heal properly. Her doctor subsequently referred her to the Return to Work (RTW) programme one month after her injury.

The nurse returned to work five months later and was assigned light duties. However, she continued to feel pain over her affected left foot from prolonged standing and walking. Together with her supervisors, her RTW coordinator monitored her closely and provided advice on modifications to her work duties to help with a gradual recovery. The nurse eventually resumed to full work duties after four and a half months.

Source of case study: Tan Tock Seng Hospital

SUPPORT PROVIDED BY RTW COORDINATOR

- Consultation with a doctor to understand worker's medical condition and discuss job modifications to match worker's functional ability.
- Work with a physiotherapist to help worker cope with the physical work demands.
- Conduct a worksite assessment to understand worker's work demands and identify potential challenges in the work environment.
- Provide an update on worker's health status to the supervisor and get the supervisor's support to help with the implementation of the job modifications.

RECOMMENDED JOB MODIFICATIONS

- Take rest breaks after every hour of constant standing or walking.
- Avoid night duties temporarily.
- Get help from colleagues when assisting hospital patients with higher care needs.
- Wear sports shoes at work.



Case Study 2

Cleaner Slipped and Fell at Loading Bay

WHAT HAPPENED?

A cleaner slipped and fell at a store loading bay while working. He sustained a fracture on his right hand and thus, had to undergo an operation. He also went through hand occupational therapy to strengthen and improve movement of his right hand for basic use in daily activities.

Subsequently, his doctor recommended him to participate in the RTW programme to help him return to work safely as he had not fully regained the use of his hand. With the help of the RTW programme, the cleaner went through five weeks of RTW interventions by the RTW coordinator. He later resumed to normal work duties after two weeks of completing the RTW programme.

Source of case study: National University Hospital

SUPPORT PROVIDED BY RTW COORDINATOR

- Consultation with a doctor to understand worker's medical condition and discuss job modifications to match worker's functional ability.
- Work with a hand occupational therapist to help worker cope with the physical work demands.
- Conduct a worksite assessment to understand worker's work demands and identify potential challenges in the work environment.
- Provide an update on worker's health status to the supervisor and get the supervisor's support to help with the implementation of the job modifications.

RECOMMENDED JOB MODIFICATIONS

- Use a 3-point support when climbing a ladder.
- Refrain from carrying objects weighing more than eight kg.
- Disallow driving duties until deemed fit by the doctor to drive vehicles.
- Erect a gradual ramp to ease work load and pace.



HAVE YOU MET WITH AND SURVIVED A WORKPLACE ACCIDENT?



Share your experience with our readers. Tell us what happened, how you felt, and how the accident could have been prevented. Your story will be valuable, because all of us can learn from your experience and know what to look out for in our workplaces.

One winning letter will be selected and published. The author of the winning letter will win a \$250 voucher.

Remember to include your full name, company name, address, contact number and Work Permit number. Send your letter to:

The Editor, iWSH
Workplace Safety and Health Council
Level 4, Ministry of Manpower Services Centre
1500 Bendemeer Road
Singapore 339946

The results for iWSH Quiz
in issue 011718 are out!
Congratulations to all!

iWSH Quiz

Issue 011718 Winners

1. Karri Santosh Kumar (GXXXX440P)
2. John Peter James (GXXXX532L)
3. Sanjay Belani (SXXXX136F)
4. Uddin Aftab (GXXXX223Q)
5. Wendy Lam Mei Chuan (SXXXX102F)
6. Senthilnathan Aravindarajan (GXXXX665U)
7. Myo Thant Aung (GXXXX085R)
8. Cher Yong (SXXXX908I)
9. Toh Guan Hoe (SXXXX835I)
10. Paolo B. Fallarcuna (GXXXX429K)

All winners will be notified via email or phone.

WINNING LETTER



Dear Editor,

Safety for workers is very important in Singapore. Even though it is hard to be safe at work, there are many efforts put in place continuously to keep workers safe. One such effort is the iWSH newsletter.

iWSH encourages and motivates us to learn to be safe at work.

Through iWSH, I am able to learn and think properly how I can prevent injuries in my workplace, so that I can go home safely and be with my family. I conduct risk assessments all the time to prevent injuries.

I am grateful for the tips, case studies and quizzes in the newsletter.

Again, thank you for your efforts for keeping me safe at work. Keep up the good work.

Yours faithfully,

GEORGE VARGEES VETHAKAN

Do you have a suggestion on how we can improve iWSH?

Tell us what you like best about the newsletter and how we can make it even better. Send your letter to:

The Editor, iWSH
Workplace Safety and Health Council
Level 4, Ministry of Manpower Services Centre
1500 Bendemeer Road
Singapore 339946

The Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Council was established on 1 April 2008 to raise WSH standards in Singapore. The Council comprises 18 leaders from the major industry sectors, the Government, unions and professionals from the legal, insurance and academic fields.

Publisher

Workplace Safety and Health Council

Address

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INJURED ON THE JOB?

Quickly report to your employer or your claim for compensation under the Work Injury Compensation Act will not be accepted.



If you are injured and need assistance with your work injury compensation claim, MOM can help you.

📍 Ministry of Manpower Services Centre, 1500 Bendemeer Road, Singapore 339946

🌐 <http://www.mom.gov.sg/wic>

☎ 6438 5122



This issue of iWSH newsletter including prizes for the Quiz and Winning Letter is sponsored by Far East Organization.

