

TECH SHEET

Prework Screening Programs

EMC Insurance Companies®

Hiring qualified employees is one of the most important business decisions an employer can make; however, it can also be one of the most difficult. A prework screening program can help determine which applicants are best qualified for specific tasks.

A prework screen (PWS) is a management tool that can help an employer assess a job candidate's ability to safely assume and/or resume work duties. The PWS is designed by a physical therapist using information the employer provides. Traditionally, a PWS is conducted after a conditional job offer has been made. It consists of a series of objective tasks that assess a worker's ability to perform the physical demands of a job. A PWS can also be used in transitional return to work (RTW) situations where an employee has been issued medical restrictions related to work activity.

Laying the Groundwork for a PWS Program

To create a PWS for a specific job, a physical therapist needs accurate job description information that provides objective task data. (See the resources listed at the end of this document for help with preparing job descriptions.)

Choosing a Physical Therapist

During a PWS, a physical therapist can help identify limitations or conditions exhibited by a candidate that could create a higher risk of injury on the job.

A PWS should be conducted using methods consistent with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) regulations and all other applicable state

and federal laws and regulations. Employers should pick a therapist who:

- Is properly trained in PWS testing and design methods and understands legal requirements
- Can perform functional job analysis and work with loss control representatives
- Understands the world of work and is a skilled communicator
- Is geographically close to the employer's job site(s)
- Has experience in both occupational and nonoccupational treatments

Following a PWS, the therapist gives the employer the worker's pass/fail results for each tested area, as well as any suggestions for additional training for the worker (i.e., proper lifting techniques). The employer is also informed of medical reasons or other reasons the test may have been halted.



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Benefits of Prework Screens

There are many benefits that come from conducting PWS as part of the hiring process:

- Improved work efficiencies and safety by matching the right worker with the job
- Reduced workers' compensation costs due to injury prevention
- Easier return to work transition for injured employees
- Avoidance of hiring prejudice

EMC Can Help

EMC can provide assistance to commercial policyholders setting up a PWS program. Our loss control process includes:

- Researching past work-related injuries to identify patterns of injury
- Analyzing job tasks in your workplace and providing guidance to help you develop job descriptions on which a PWS will be based
- Identifying physical therapists who can appropriately conduct a PWS, help you create testing criteria and track your data over time

For more information on setting up a prework screening program at your company, contact your EMC loss control representative or your independent insurance agent. You can also email losscontrol@emcins.com.

For Additional Information

EMC Tech Sheets: www.emcins.com

- Return to Work Programs—Parts I and II
- Employee Job Descriptions:
The Primary Employment Document

EMC Loss Prevention Information Manual:
www.emcins.com

- Employment Practices section

Department of Labor: www.dol.gov

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission:
www.eeoc.gov