



Workers' Comp Injury Response + Light Duty Packet

From injury report to return-to-work: treatment, restrictions, light-duty offers, and a communication log that protects everyone.

WHAT THIS HELPS YOU DO

Use this packet from the moment a work injury is reported to manage treatment, restrictions, light-duty offers, and communication — keeping the employee connected to work and the employer clear of retaliation exposure.

WHEN TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

- The day any work-related injury or illness is reported
- When medical restrictions arrive and someone asks 'what do we do with them?'
- Before offering — or declining to offer — light duty
- When an injured employee goes quiet, or the employer is tempted to
- Before any discipline or separation involving an injured worker

WHAT THIS DOCUMENT HELPS PREVENT

- Workers' comp retaliation claims (Texas Labor Code Chapter 451)
- Injuries that never got reported to the carrier on time
- Light-duty offers made verbally, vaguely, or not at all
- Lost-time claims that grow because no one kept contact
- Restrictions ignored on the floor because supervisors never saw them

Faulkner HR Solutions focuses on the system behind the people problem. This tool is designed to help employers slow down the decision, identify the risk, and create proof before the issue becomes a claim, complaint, turnover event, or credibility problem.

BEFORE YOU START: READINESS CHECKLIST

Gather the following before working through this document. Incomplete inputs are one of the most common reasons employer decisions fail under later scrutiny.

Have it	Input	Notes / location
☐	Employee name and role	



Have it	Input	Notes / location
☐	Date of incident, request, or separation	
☐	Supervisor involved	
☐	Policy or handbook section that applies	
☐	Prior documentation on file	
☐	Pay records, if applicable	
☐	Relevant emails, texts, notes, or complaints	
☐	Decision-maker name	
☐	Deadline, if applicable	



INJURY RESPONSE PACKET

Two goals run in parallel: get the employee proper care and a safe path back to work, and build a clean record of every step. Neither works without the other.

Part 1 — Injury Report

Employee name and position	
Date, time, and location of injury	
How the injury occurred (facts, not fault)	
Body part(s) and apparent severity	
Witnesses	
Reported to whom, and when	
Date reported to carrier / claim number	

Part 2 — Immediate Response

Done	Response step	Date / notes
☐	Medical attention arranged (emergency or clinic per network rules)	
☐	Scene made safe; hazard corrected or flagged	
☐	Injury reported to carrier within required timeframe	
☐	OSHA recordability assessed (see OSHA Recordkeeping Readiness Checklist)	
☐	Employee told what happens next — claim process, contact person, no-retaliation assurance	
☐	Supervisor statement and witness statements collected while fresh	

Part 3 — Treatment and Restriction Tracking

Date	Provider / visit	Work status (full / restricted / off)	Restrictions (exact language)



Part 4 — Light-Duty Analysis

Compare the current restrictions to real tasks. A light-duty offer must be genuine work within restrictions — not humiliation duty, and not a pretext to force a quit.

Available task	Within restrictions?	Hours / shift	Pay rate	Selected?

Part 5 — Light-Duty Offer Record

Offer made in writing (date) — duties, schedule, pay, start date, duration	
Restrictions the offer honors (quote the provider's language)	
Employee response (accepted / declined / no response, with date)	
If declined: reason given; carrier notified (date)	
Supervisor briefed on restrictions — what the employee will NOT do	

Part 6 — Communication Log

Regular, respectful contact is the single best predictor of return-to-work. Log every touch.

Date	Who / method	Purpose / summary



Part 7 — Return-to-Work Review

Done	Return step	Date / notes
☐	Current work status confirmed with provider documentation	
☐	Restrictions ended or updated — supervisor re-briefed	
☐	If restrictions became permanent: ADA interactive process opened	
☐	Any staffing/schedule decision about this employee reviewed for Ch. 451 retaliation risk	
☐	File complete: injury report, statements, restrictions, offers, log	

Role	Name / signature	Date
Managed by		
Reviewed by		

STOP AND REVIEW BEFORE ACTING

If any statement below is true, pause. Get the decision reviewed by HR, counsel, or Faulkner HR Solutions before you act.

- ☐ Anyone has suggested the injury 'didn't happen at work' without investigating.
- ☐ The employee filed a comp claim and discipline is suddenly under discussion.
- ☐ Light duty is being designed to be unpleasant so the employee will quit.
- ☐ Restrictions are being ignored on the floor 'because we're short-handed.'
- ☐ The employee has heard nothing from the employer in over two weeks.
- ☐ Termination of an injured worker is proposed while the claim is open.

MINIMUM DOCUMENTATION STANDARD

Before this file is closed, the employer should be able to answer every question below and point to where the proof lives.

Question	Your answer / where the proof is stored
What happened?	
When did it happen?	
Who observed or reported it?	



Question	Your answer / where the proof is stored
What policy, standard, deadline, or expectation applies?	
What decision was made?	
Who had authority to make the decision?	
What alternatives were considered?	
What risk was reviewed?	
What follow-up is required?	
Where is the proof stored?	

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Reporting late to the carrier and turning a routine claim into a disputed one.
2. Interrogating the injured employee about fault instead of documenting facts.
3. Making light-duty offers verbally, then disputing what was offered.
4. Assigning light duty that violates the written restrictions.
5. Going silent — the injured employee who never hears from work hires a lawyer.
6. Treating a comp claim as betrayal; Chapter 451 retaliation cases are built from exactly that attitude.
7. Missing the ADA handoff when temporary restrictions turn permanent.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Keep the packet open until the employee is at full duty or the claim resolves. Medical records go to the confidential medical file; the communication log keeps running; and any adverse decision touching this employee gets a retaliation review first — the injury date is a timeline anchor a jury will see.

Before you terminate, deduct, discipline, classify, or respond, get the decision reviewed.

Call 210.446.8730 or email thomas@faulknerhrsolutions.info.



Before you process payroll, terminate, classify, deduct, or respond to a claim, get the decision reviewed.

Need help applying this to a real workplace decision?

Faulkner HR Solutions helps Texas employers, nonprofits, municipalities, and growing businesses fix the people systems behind recurring workplace problems.

If this document raised a risk flag, do not guess your way through the next step.

Call: 210.446.8730

Email: thomas@faulknerhrsolutions.info

Website: faulknerhrsolutions.info

DISCLAIMER

This resource is provided for general employer education and planning purposes. It is not legal advice and does not create an attorney-client relationship. Employment laws, agency guidance, and local requirements may change. Employers should review the facts of each situation before acting and consult appropriate HR or legal counsel when needed.