




A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER  
MEMBRE DU RÉSEAU STAR ALLIANCE 

# *In-Flight Service Return to Work Program*

Generally, the Air Canada In-Flight Service Rehabilitation Return to Work Program consists of four phases which, normally, do not exceed six months in total duration. The employee is not obligated to enter at Phase I and/or exit from Phase IV. Entry and exit can occur at any phase of the return to work program. It is a voluntary program yet medical information drives this system. Therefore, if the attending physician and/or others involved in the treatment of the employee deem the employee ready to begin modified duties or to return to incumbent job with restrictions and the employee chooses not to return, wage income protection programs (WCB & WIP) may be affected.

The Air Canada In-Flight Service Rehabilitation Return to Work Program is offered through the auspices of:

- *Occupational Health Services Department*
- *Employee Rehabilitation Services*
- *Workers' Compensation Board (where available)*
- *C.U.P.E. Airline Division*

As much as possible, the rehabilitation return to work program is tailored to the specific needs of the employee respecting structure and time parameters. The employee is encouraged to participate fully in each phase of his/her return to work program and is reminded to keep in mind his/her physiological/psychological abilities/limitations.

The employee, Occupational Health Services and the Rehabilitation Co-ordinator liaise regularly to ensure the best possible results from the return to work program. As indicated, the medical data drives the program. The employee must, therefore, obtain clearance from Occupational Health Services for progression into subsequent phases of the return to work program, for requalification training requirements and for return to full-time work responsibilities without restrictions.

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## ***PHASE I -Transitional Duties***

Primarily designed for the employee who has been away from the work place for an extended period of time or for the employee who can perform only light duties which do not involve walking or sitting for extended periods of time.

Within this return to work program, it is generally office duties of some kind; administrative and technical support function.

Generally, the flight attendant (employee) is expected to work a minimum of four hours per day a minimum of two days per week. The employee may work a maximum of eight hours per day a maximum of five days per week. It is also generally accepted that once the flight attendant reaches the ability to work eight hours per day five days per week, he/she is able to move on to Phase II.

The rationale for moving to another phase once this maximum is reached is two-fold:

1 - The return to work program is designed to return the flight attendant to the incumbent job; that of flight attendant

2 - It is important that the transitional or other duties do not become more attractive than the incumbent job. If it seems easier for the flight attendant and we have foster this environment, it will indeed be difficult to return the employee of the job of flight attendant.

**NOTE** - Flight Attendants awaiting diagnosis or in possession of poor prognosis for a return to full flying duties without restrictions may enter into this phase of Rehabilitation Return to Work as part of the education process toward finding other meaningful employment within or outside the company. This translated means the employee would perform the tasks of the particular office for four days per week and would spend one day per week preparing resumes, replying to PVA (Position Vacancy Advice) within the Company and preparing for interviews within and outside the company.

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## ***PHASE II - Ground Duty Service (Meet & Greet)***

In this phase of the return to work program, the flight attendant is re-introduced to the work environment (the airplane). The flight attendant selects from a series of available four-hour shifts and joins operating crews in the on-board pre-flight activities.

The flight attendant return to work candidate is dressed in full uniform including valid M.O.T. Aircrew airside I.D. and participates to extent possible in all pre-flight activity outside the responsibility of the operating crew.

These activities include greeting passengers and helping with jackets, seat locations, and light ground service (champagne/orange juice/newspaper/amenities/etc). The flight attendant is not required to have M.O.T. flight attendant qualifications and as a result is not permitted to be the sole responsible person for activity that must be performed by an operating crew member.

This includes such things as safety equipment check and taking boarding passes at the aircraft threshold. M.O.T. requires that the operating crew verify the safety equipment on board.

Because the F/A return to work candidate may only assist but not be the sole responsible person for this activity. The passenger entrance door during boarding is a primary exit while the aircraft is parked at the gate. The F/A rehab return to work candidate may only assist in taking the boarding passes as an operating crew member is required by M.O.T. regulations to man the emergency exits open and/or in use during station stops.

The F/A rehabilitation return to work candidate will work two to five days per week for four hours per day.

Again the flight attendant is encouraged to participate fully to keep this phase of the return to work program but is also reminded to keep in mind his/her physiological/psychological abilities/limitations.

The flight attendant must always excuse him/herself and find a rest area away from the aircraft (for example boarding lounge) when necessary. As with all phases of the return to work program and, indeed, the total duration of the program, this phase is time specific.

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### ***PHASE III - ADC (flight attendant in passenger seat)***

If a prolonged flying phase is projected, the flight attendant will start the flying portion of the return to work program with Phase III.

In this flying phase, the flight attendant requires full uniform and valid Aircrew airside I.D. issued from M.O.T.

The Flight Attendant will choose a flying schedule for the duration of the period of restriction indicated in the medical evaluation clearing the flight attendant to this flying phase. The flight attendant then chooses flights from the local Base pairings and is obliged to fly with local In-Charge flight attendants. The flight attendant then telephones employee travel and books a passenger seat using the company business pass priority of PY1/J10

Once this is complete, the flight attendant will submit the schedule for approval to the Base Rehabilitation Co-ordinator or support person for approval. Once the schedule is approved, the flight attendant then completes deadheads passes for each flight marking the company business category on the travel pass.

The flight attendant is expected to participate (again to the extent possible) in all aspects of the pre-flight (briefing, aircraft preparation including galley if able) flight and post-flight duties. Once briefing is complete (if not onboard the aircraft) or prior to briefing (if onboard), the flight attendant will obtain a boarding pass for seat assignment from the gate agent for the chosen flight.

During this phase the flight attendant is expected to fly **two or three days per week for a total of 9 to 12 hours, monthly total should fall between 35 to 50 hours**. These numbers reflect the minimum and maximum flying respectively during the phase. The actual flights would be chosen in consultation with the rehabilitation co-ordinator and support person (i.e. flight duration/duty day). Layovers are not usually permitted; the rationale being undue hardship should any regression or exacerbation of illness/injury occur away from home base.

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### ***PHASE IV - ADC (flight attendant in flight attendant seat)***

In this final phase of the return to work program, the focus is primarily on the work hardening. At this stage, the flight attendant is utilizing this flying phase to build endurance.

The flight attendant will fly **two or three days per week for a total of 12 to 15 hours, monthly total should fall between 45 to 60 hours (absolute maximum of 65)**. Once the flight attendant

is able to fly 60 to 65 hours per four-week period, he/she should be ready to assume full flying responsibilities without restrictions (Regular blocks are usually of built with 60 -75 hours of flying time).

The flight attendant will again build a complete schedule for the duration of the restriction in consultation with the Rehabilitation Co-ordinator and/or Rehab Support person at their base and will fly with local In-Charge flight attendants. In this phase, the flight attendants return to work candidate is generally restricted to wide-bodies aircraft with the exception of the B767-300.

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## ***SUMMARY***

In closing, please keep these points in mind:

- The In-Flight Service Rehabilitation Return to Work Program is designed to return the flight attendant to the incumbent employment; that of flight attendant.
- The In-Flight Service Rehabilitation Return to Work Program is time specific. Every effort is made to tailor the return to work program to address the needs of the flight attendants involved; however, as a norm, the entire program should not exceed six months.

The flight attendant should be made aware of the importance of maintaining structure within the return to work program and if, after time, no probability of a return to the incumbent job is foreseeable, the Rehabilitation Co-ordinator flight attendant and others involved in the return to work process must explore re-training, re-education and the PVA process.

The flight attendant may not (for purely medical reasons) be able to return to the job of flight attendant. It is better for the employee and the employer that this issue be addressed within the six-month rehabilitation return to work program.

- Communication among all those involved with the flight attendant's return to work program is of the utmost importance. These individuals include the flight attendant, Occupational Health Services, the attending physician, the Rehabilitation Co-ordinator and/or Rehab Support person, the claims specialists with the WCB and WIP as well as C.U.P.E/ and personnel services.
- The flight attendant is the only person responsible for his/her conduct during the return to work program and it is often the most difficult part of the program for the flight attendant especially when participating in the uniformed phases of the return to work program. It is difficult for the flight attendant candidate to say to a colleague that he/she cannot participate in the particular activity and this especially true when there is no physically apparent disabilities.

While full participation in each of the phases is encouraged, we cannot emphasise enough the importance of keeping in mind individual ability/limitations and communicating this to colleagues on the line when in a return to work program.