

## Knowledge Corner OEHCRI Occupational Health Knowledge

### What you need to know about a Functional Capacity Evaluation (FCE)

#### What is an FCE?

A Functional Capacity Evaluation (FCE) is an assessment for workers who have suffered injuries that could affect their employment opportunities. The worker's ability to perform work and their physical tolerances to a variety of real and/or simulated work activities is assessed.

#### FCE Will Yield Information in Regards to:

Has the individual reached a medical endpoint?  
Does a patient require further intervention and what

intervention is appropriate?

Is there a need for therapy or a change in current therapy approach or direction?

Insight regarding potential work performance and job feasibility.

Identification of discrepancies between symptoms and objective findings.

Generation of data to serve as basis for job modification and work restrictions.

Establishes a baseline of performance that provides a basis for Work Hardening/Work Conditioning.

#### Who Should Perform an FCE?

A Physical or Occupational Therapist with knowledge/experience in:

- Administration and interpretation of FCE
- Evaluation of demands in the workplace
- Biometrics
- Identification of behaviors that interfere with task performance
- Relevant laws/regulations eg: ADA, OSHA, WC, etc.

#### What are Fit for Duty Examinations?

A fit-for-duty evaluation involves a comprehensive examination

directed toward determining the worker's ability to return to his/her job.

Specific functional capabilities, e.g., lifting and other material handling techniques, are tested based on job-specific needs.

The results of this examination determine the employee's ability to return to work safely with or without accommodations

#### When are Fit for Duty Exam's Done ?

Based on company Policy, an FFDE is typically requested

by a supervisor or HR department:

- When an employee returns to work after and STD/LTD, or FMLA
- Prior to disciplinary action for unacceptable behavior/conduct if thought to be due to medical/psychological cause
- For work and non-work-related injuries whenever there is a direct question about capacity to meet physical or mental requirements of position

#### Trigger for FFDE Examination

A Physical or mental condition which appears to impair capabilities to safely and effectively complete work assignments (physical/mental condition places employee or other's health/safety at risk during course of performing essential job functions). The employee must have a functional job description in order to make determination

#### Criteria for FFDE

- Decline in job performance believed to be related to physical/mental condition
- Change in health status that may actually/potentially effect safe job performance
- Unfavorable change in behavior in workplace
- Unfavorable change in appearance/affect believed to be related to physical/mental condition
- Return to Work following illness/injury