



# What constitutes a sound occupational physician IME report?

## A consumer (employer) perspective

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# Key Points

1. Why is an IME required?
2. Information provided for IME
3. How is it used by the employer?
4. What is value-adding report for the employer?
5. Comments/feedback on IME reports received

# Why is an IME required?

1. Normally looking at Fitness to Work assessments
  - Workers compensation (majority)
  - Non work related injuries
2. When are we requesting an IME?
  - Almost always 12 months+ after injury/illness. Rarely early in injury/illness phase. Critical timepoint
  - Return to full work capacity not achieved or outlook unclear. Lack information on capacity from treaters
  - Limited information from Insurer IME (i.e. workers compensation claims)
  - Independent opinion important to add to information on individual's work capacity

# Information provided for IME

1. Need to provide documents/information to assist the examiner in their overall assessment of the employee
  - Worker's claim form
  - Medical certificates
  - Occupational Rehab Provider reports
  - Medical report
  - RTW Plans
  - Job description
  - Job task analysis/inherent requirements of job – VERY IMPORTANT

# Information provided for IME

- Both physical & non-physical requirements of job

e.g.

Step over knee high benches when entering/exiting work areas and other clean room areas. <b>Frequency = up 12 times/day but can be more at times</b>
Intermittent lifting of bins weighing up to 6 kg containing plastics and general waste. <b>Frequency = several times/day</b>
Intermittent lifting of tubs containing product (around 10 kg) from floor to trolley stand. <b>Frequency = several times/day</b>
Repeated reaching above shoulder height during cleaning of packaging line equipment. <b>Frequency = not daily. May be once/week at most</b>

<b>Training Requirements</b>	Attend and complete ongoing site based training requirements required for role (ie GMP knowledge, SOP training, EHS training, technical knowledge training). Training included classroom style training and PC based training <b>Frequency = 3 - 4 times/week when required</b>
<b>Team Interaction</b>	Employee required to work and communicate with other employees as part of team in order to ensure all key requirements of production processes are maintained <b>Frequency = continuous</b>
<b>Analytical Requirements of Role</b>	Record process information, including entering batch comments, filling log books, completing QA testing sheets, recording calibration results. <b>Frequency = continuous</b>
	Competing in-process testing as required. <b>Frequency = continuous</b>

# How is it used by the employer?

- Focus is on work capacity, not necessarily the actual medical condition
- Not exclusively, but it is the key work capacity information that can drive decisions on individual's ability to perform their inherent job role. Important to employer making decisions on employment or job
- Medical privacy is maintained and only limited employer representatives are privy to report
- Who normally see report/capacity opinion?
  - Direct manager, HR, OHS, Occ Health

# What is value-adding report for the employer?

- Clear opinion on work capacity
- There are always key questions we want answered in IME:
  1. Is the individual able to perform the inherent requirements of the job without unreasonable risk to their health and safety or others?
  2. Does the medical condition(s) prevent them from performing the inherent requirements of the job, how do they affect their capacity to perform the duties without risk to own or others' health and safety?
  3. If individual is currently not able to perform the full inherent requirements of the job, without risk to their health and safety (or that of others):
    - (a) what work, if any, can they currently perform without risk to their health and safety (or that of others)?
    - (b) what limitations may apply to them performing other duties?
    - (c) are they likely to be fit for full duties in the future? If so, when?
  4. If not currently fit to resume full duties, are there any services, facilities or accommodation you can identify to enable so they can perform the inherent requirements of the job position? If adjustments are required, for how long would they be required?

# What is value-adding report for the employer?

In summary:

- What is current work capacity vs inherent job requirements
- What is outlook/timeframe to achieving full work capacity
- What could an employer do to enable person to perform job if can't do all job requirements
  - E.g. change in work shifts, ergonomic adjustments, tools/equipment, restrict certain aspects of job?
- Are their limitations on individual that prevent doing other job roles
  - E.g. no night shift, mobility issues?



# Finally.....Comments/feedback on IME reports received

## Positives

- Report can be understood by non-medical people
- Clear unambiguous answers to questions
- Timely reports (typically within 2 weeks)
- Patient not disputed report opinions. Seen as fair and accurate
- Generally experience not traumatic to our employees who have undergone IME

## Improvement Opportunities

- More focus on identifying specifics of what person can/can't do. Important as helps with employer decision process
- Advice to what employer could do to help person do the role. What support or other ways of working should be considered

