

# Best Known Methods to Get People to Call the Triage Nurse

Businesses that successfully use Medcor's telephonic triage service for workplace injuries face many challenges and use a variety of methods to facilitate employees calling the nurse triage line. The business case for triage is so compelling that every company can (and should) require that a work-related injury must be reported in a timely manner.

Everyone knows that lag time is the enemy of good triage and effective claim case management. Medcor provides the solution with reporting tools that provide a great benefit to the injured worker and site coordinator. Most love the fact that the nurse will help them decide what to do to properly care for the injury. Supervisors like not having to play doctor.

It is not uncommon for a company to think it is too difficult to change behavior, or that their challenges (industry, culture, state, etc.) are insurmountable. While there are differences between companies, there are also many more similarities that prove that Medcor triage services works in any type of environment.

Here are some of the best known methods we've observed to increase effectiveness:

## 1. Introducing Triage

- a. New employees are shown our orientation video (available in Spanish or English). It should be introduced as a benefit to the employee, because that is how it is perceived. In a simple way, this plants the seeds about what to do and what to expect from the interaction with the nurse. In most cases, supervisors are given a card with the phone number on it. The service works best when the injured worker contacts their supervisor who then initiates the call and provides some preliminary information. It is recommended that they then leave area to enable a private conversation. If the injury is going to require more than a band-aid, but less than an ambulance ride or clear need for an ER, there should be no reason not to make the initial triage call, anywhere, anytime.
- b. Supervisors are the primary audience for education and training. Besides an introductory video with a sample call done on-site, teleconferences are then initiated with a Medcor trainer for a Q&A. Remote employees may call in to their supervisor, or dispatcher or HR when injured. When the supervisors are properly trained, they direct the employee to call whenever in doubt. Injured workers are guided to a preferred provider whenever practical. Even in states where employers cannot mandate a provider, being able to make a recommendation is allowed and proves to be very effective.
- c. One challenge is helping people to quickly identify where they are located in order to expedite the process so the Medcor nurse can

discuss the state of their health. When present, the supervisor is asked to come back on the line and debrief with the nurse at the conclusion of the call with the injured worker.

2. Work Rules.

- a. Employers can mandate basic work rules about reporting injuries. This is a safety requirement and is also necessary to comply with OSHA reporting. Even in states where employees are free to choose which doctor they see, they can be required to report their injuries in a timely manner. The triage assessment should be part of that report as part of the mechanism they use to help them understand what they need to do next.
- b. At the time of the triage call, it is not yet certain that a doctor is even required! First aid and self care may be enough. If a doctor is required, the triage nurse makes a recommendation, but allows the employee to make other choices, depending on where they are calling from.

3. Enforcement.

- a. Companies with excellent results often provide incentives for compliance with best practices and penalties for non-compliance.
- b. Progressive discipline is often necessary when procedures are not followed

4. Word of Mouth.

- a. Employees talk, even in dispersed workforces. You want this word getting around since it is good news. The experience over the phone with a Medcor triage nurse is so positive and unbiased that word spreads quickly among employees.

- 5. Most employees want a credible, fast and convenient response when they get hurt at work. Telephonic triage service provides it. Experience shows that at tens of thousands of worksites, after simply and positively introducing employees to triage and expecting them to call when they get hurt gains the benefit, but like any culture shift, it takes reminders and constant reinforcement especially due to turnover.
- 6. Calling the nurse needs to be a company expectation and formal directive in the policies and procedures that are conveyed and reinforced. The best results follow proper training, accountability and timely calling. From a legal perspective there is no requirement for an injured worker to call Medcor, but almost all employees do follow their employer's injury reporting procedures for the handling of workplace injuries. If not, it may be a red flag you want to know about right away.
- 7. Formal introductions in a letter are often used to explain the service to every employee and describe what should be done in the event an injury occurs. Like most educational processes, it takes a little work but the reward is well worth it. Medcor On-Line proves that excellent telephonic triage cuts WC claim frequency and costs by 20-50%, because the more timely and accurate clinical medical assessments, the less likely there will be overspending on a claim file. For more, see [www.medcor.com](http://www.medcor.com)