

Disability Management of an Employee with Tendonitis

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Description of the Organization

Auto-Seats is an automotive manufacturing supplier company that builds car seats as well as other accessories for a name-brand car company, operating globally. At the Southern Ontario site, there are over a thousand employees. The different areas of work include production, administration, parts planning, quality control, quality assurance, human resources, engineering, maintenance, materials service, business planning, and more. Specifically on the production line, employees typically workday and night shifts, rotating biweekly. A production line worker would start by building the frame of the seat and continuously add on new parts to form a completed car seat using tools and machinery in the factory. The job of a production line worker is repetitive and heavy work that requires the constant use of muscles.

Description of the Incident

Sovann Peng is a 35-year-old production line worker at Auto-Seats. His family immigrated to Canada when he was 11 years old. His family struggles to pay house bills and to put food on the table. The day he was legally able to work, he has been a big provider for his family, therefore, working full-time with this company is a big deal for him.

Sovann has tendonitis but when he started working with this company at 20-years-old, he did not present with any health issues or required any accommodation needs. Sovann reported his injury to his team leader, Woodie Everly, one year ago and he has since been put on modified work. His modified work orders include not doing any work above his shoulders as well as limited work with his right hand. Woodie is following up with Sovann about his injury and wants to determine if he can return to performing regular duties without modification.

Sovann and Woodie have been working together since Sovann started with the company. Woodie has been assessing production line performance and notes that Sovann has been producing less builds and slowing down production. With a mass order coming in the next

couple months, Woodie wants to ensure his employees on the line are properly accommodated and able to perform job functions to ensure efficient production.

On his next shift, Sovann comes in with a new medical note from his physician stating he is still unable to perform regular job duties at full ability for at least another 3 months until the next follow-up visit. This means that Sovann must remain kept on modified work. It was suggested that Sovann should participate in the company's Disability Management Program. Woodie must now proceed with this case.

Discussion Questions

1. What may be the cause of Sovann's tendonitis?
2. What standardized assessment did Sovann's physician conduct to evaluate Sovann's functional ability to perform his job responsibilities? How does this assessment compare or differ to a physical demands analysis?
3. What general steps should Woodie follow as a team leader, when an employee reports an injury in the workplace?
4. Is Woodie allowed to fire Sovann if he wants to get rid of employees who have been causing drawbacks since he does not want to deal with them before the mass order? Why or why not?
5. What is the purpose of Sovann's participation in Auto-Seats' Disability Management Program? What would be the expected outcomes for both Sovann and the company with this program?

Appendices

Invitation

Hello,

My name is Alexia. I am an undergraduate student at York University.

As a part of my Occupational Health and Safety course, I would like to interview you about common health and safety challenges in your organization. Your answers will help us to understand real-life health & safety challenges in organizations. I will, then, use your answers to develop a case study about a fictitious organization. This case study will be shared with Occupational Health and Safety educators across the world to be used in their courses.

Our interview should not take more than 30 minutes.

Please give me 30 minutes of your time to support my learning.

My Email address is: achao@my.yorku.ca

Thank you,

Alexia Chao

Interview Questions

- 1) Can we start with getting to know you? What kind of an organization do you work for?
What is your role? How long have you been in this organization/role?
- 2) Can you please provide more details about your organization? (e.g., industry, size, daily activities etc.)
- 3) Can you tell us about a significant health and safety-related challenge you have been facing in this organization?
 - a. Why is this a significant problem?
 - b. What is the management's position in this challenge?
 - c. What is the employee's position in this challenge?
 - d. Why do you think this problem has a difficult solution?
- 4) Can you please tell us about a specific incident when this problem was presented?
 - a. What was the situation?
 - b. What was your task?
 - c. What action was taken?
 - d. What were the results?
- 5) Is there anything else you would like to share with us?