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# *FIVE BEST PRACTICES*

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## **TO MITIGATE UNNECESSARY RECORDABLE ILLNESSES AND INJURIES ON INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS**

*In this eBook, health and safety professionals in industrial organizations will find practical advice to help reduce unnecessary recordables by implementing high quality care and creating a culture of safety.*



# THE ROLE OF HSE PROGRAMS

A recent client of Remote Medical International clearly defined the role of the Health, Safety, and Environment programs. To paraphrase: it is the goal of HSE to ensure that everyone who comes to this worksite leaves it with the same quality of health as they arrived, if not even better.

Achieving that goal has never been more challenging. In a world where our understanding of best practices in medicine is constantly changing, it can be difficult for health and safety professionals to figure out the best way to ensure their employees stay healthy and productive.

In this eBook, we will explore best practices and provide practical advice that will help health and safety professionals develop programs and build partnerships that move their company closer to the ideal of a healthy and happy workforce.

## ABOUT REMOTE MEDICAL INTERNATIONAL

Remote Medical International® has over a decade of experience helping clients manage and improve the health and well-being of their global workforce. By creating an ecosystem of medical screenings, on-site medical staff, and injury management, we improve the quality of on-site medical care while reducing costs.

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# *BEST PRACTICE #1*

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## **INDUSTRIAL MEDICAL PROVIDERS**

Industrial medical providers are clinically trained personnel. Their qualifications and experience levels vary depending on the requirements and care levels needed on a given worksite. These providers are unique in that they have industrial health and safety experience, as well as regulatory training (OSHA, OGP, IADC etc.), and can be a critical part of an industrial organization's health and safety program.

A good industrial medical provider delivers the highest quality of care for patients while also understanding the regulatory context of the project and minimizing overtreatments that lead to unnecessary recordables.



To determine if your current industrial medical provider meets this standard, ask yourself the following questions:

- Are your employees and HSE staff satisfied with the quality of care?
- Are the medical provider's staff experienced in your area of work, and/or do they proactively engage with your teams to become familiar with your unique context?
- Is there appropriate conservative management of minor conditions?
- Are your employees being given an appropriate amount of time off after visits to your current health care professionals? Who is proactively following up with the injured worker daily to ensure the injury is being managed as recommended and progressing as expected?
- Are major medical issues being documented and managed effectively with appropriate treatment provided?
- Are your occupational health care services coordinated effectively between providers?

If the answer to any of these questions is negative or uncertain, you may want to consider whether your industrial medical provider is contributing effectively to your health and safety program. It may be time to explore a new provider that can better contribute to your health and safety goals.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

*Make sure your industrial medical providers understand how to deliver high-quality and appropriate care that minimizes unnecessary recordables in an industrial context.*

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## *BEST PRACTICE #2*

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### **CLINICAL SERVICES AND OVERSIGHT**

One of the major causes of poor clinical, financial, and regulatory outcomes is the lack of effective clinical services and oversight. Clinical services is an umbrella of clinical experts who support field providers. It also ensures the selection of the appropriate industrial provider, provides continuous support, implements effective medical practices, and strives for constant improvement of both providers and practices.

Hiring a properly trained medical provider who is familiar with industrial projects is the first step in an HSE-aware clinical services program. You should vet the hiring and selection practices of your medical provider to ensure they are implementing a program that will result in the right placement for your project. Three practices you should look for are:

**1** Assessment of candidates' current clinical knowledge, certifications, experience, and conservative management awareness

**2** Consideration of the provider's personality fit for your location, culture, or project

**3** On-boarding and training programs that prepare candidates for industrial contexts and your specific project



Once a great candidate is hired and on-boarded, good clinical services and oversight programs should be focused on ensuring their success in achieving the goals of delivering high-quality medical care, avoiding unnecessary recordables, and reducing unnecessary evacuations. Note that the primary goal of healthcare providers should always be the health and safety of the patient, even when reducing unnecessary recordables and evacuations.

Some examples of quality clinical services and oversight include:

- A ramp-up phase for all new placements that partners the on-site medical provider with an off-site supervisor to ensure that proper medical protocols are being implemented. For example, a probationary or onboarding period.
- Continuous 100% chart review by off-site experts to ensure that high-quality and appropriate medical care is being delivered.
- 24/7 access to off-site clinical experts in providing consultation on industrial and challenging projects, including board-certified doctors and specialists.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

*Good clinical services and oversight is a team effort that ensures the right medical professional is properly selected and supported to provide appropriate medical care.*



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## *BEST PRACTICE #3*

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### **ESTABLISHING TRUST**

Trust is critical to an effective health, safety, and environment program. Trust must exist between you, your industrial medical provider, and your employees. A breakdown in trust between any of these parties can put your entire health and safety program at risk, increasing the likelihood of dangerous injuries and costly regulatory and high resource events.





## THREE SIGNS THERE MAY BE A BREAKDOWN IN TRUST

1. Workers hide injuries because they are concerned with the repercussions of seeking care.
2. The HSE team has concerns about the ability of the on-site medical professional to do their job effectively.
3. Lack of transparency and accountability in medical costs.

Establishing or rebuilding trust requires an honest partnership, based on open communication, between your health and safety staff and your medical provider. Examples of such a partnership can include:

- Frequent and effective health risk assessments
- In-depth project planning
- Direct involvement of your on-site medical professional with safety talks and programs
- Timely investigation and analysis of events
- Proactive programs and efforts to raise HSE awareness

When your workforce sees a true partnership forged between the health and safety team and the medical provider, they are more likely to participate in and help establish a culture that values health and safety.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

*An effective health and safety program is difficult to achieve if there isn't trust between you, your employees, and your medical provider. Keep an eye out for signs trust may have broken down, and work hard to build the open communication necessary to establish trust.*

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# *BEST PRACTICE #4*

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## **INJURY MANAGEMENT**

One of the principal concerns of many HSE managers is that their medical providers don't understand how to establish whether medical issues are work-related during every patient contact, which can often lead to unnecessary recordables. Trained industrial providers are astute at managing every patient interaction carefully to obtain important clinical information, in addition to the critical timing and mechanism of the event preceding the chief complaint. By systemically approaching each patient this same way, the provider can establish work-relatedness.

Untrained providers that lack knowledge of industrial contexts or an understanding of what constitutes a medical treatment case may gather the relevant information from the patient's report, but not put it in appropriate context.

Examples of things that experienced providers also consider to establish whether an event is work-related include:



**TIMING OF THE EVENT**



**LOCATION, SETTING, AND  
MATERIALS ON-SITE**



**FORCES, COUNTER FORCES, AND  
POTENTIAL ENERGY SURROUNDING  
THE INCIDENT**



**PREEXISTING CONDITIONS  
OF THE PATIENT**



**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION  
FROM THE HSE TEAM**

All too often a failure to understand and record the full context of an event can turn a minor incident into a major recordable event down the line. As such, it's critical for the medical provider and health and safety team to not minimize seemingly minor visits, injuries, or illnesses.

| SIX STRATEGIES TO ENSURE PROPER INJURY MANAGEMENT                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Treat every case the same, whether or not the problem seems work-related.                                                              |
| 2. Get the exact details of the event.                                                                                                    |
| 3. Closely involve health and safety personnel.                                                                                           |
| 4. Use consistent systems and processes to minimize mistakes.                                                                             |
| 5. Familiarize yourself with company guidelines and protocols.                                                                            |
| 6. Support your on-site providers with injury management services that can help mitigate the chances of unnecessary recordable incidents. |

## KEY TAKEAWAY

*There's no such thing as a minor event. Your medical provider and health and safety team should consistently gather all necessary information to provide high-quality care and establish whether an event is work-related to avoid costly mistakes and recordables.*



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# *BEST PRACTICE #5*

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## **MEDICAL SCREENING**

Certain regulations may require medical screening of employees, such as the Department of Transportation's requirements for operating commercial vehicles. Companies can also choose to make medical screening a part of its standard practices for all employees. When considering the likelihood of a recordable case, the fitness of your workforce for duty is one of the prime factors influencing the chances of a work-related injury.

Whether it is someone suffering from an untreated medical condition or managing a chronic pre-existing disease, medical screening can be an important part of mitigating recordables.

Benefits of medical screening can include:

**1** Meeting regulatory requirements

**2** Establishing a baseline for preexisting conditions

**3** Identifying medical issues that may require ongoing care and support

**4** Screening for illegal drugs and other dangerous substances



## THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN SELECTING A MEDICAL SCREENING PROVIDER

Are they able to provide screenings that meet regulatory requirements?

Can screenings occur on the worksite, at home of record, or at a central processing facility?

How well does the provider follow up with you and with employees around potential medical concerns?

Is data from screenings available to other medical providers on your project to improve delivery of care?

## KEY TAKEAWAY

*Appropriate medical screenings can help identify and avoid situations that can often lead to unnecessary recordable incidents.*

## CONCLUSION

At the end of any project, every health and safety professional wants to know that their workforce delivered their best effort and are able to return home healthy and proud of their accomplishments. Achieving this goal in an environment where the standard of care is changing rapidly can feel daunting, but is not impossible.

Applying the following best practices to your health and safety programs is a great place to start:

1

Select an industrial medical provider that understands how to mitigate unnecessary recordables

2

Ensure that provider has effective policies for medical governance and oversight

3

Invest in building trust between your health and safety team, your medical providers, and your workforce

4

Manage injuries with the utmost care to avoid unnecessary recordables, both on and off site

5

Use medical screenings to help mitigate medical risks that can lead to unnecessary recordables





## LET'S MITIGATE.

Reducing unnecessary recordable incidents in an industrial setting requires a health, safety, and environment program built upon high standards. Your industrial medical provider should be a key partner in helping you achieve this goal. We hope this eBook has provided you with practical advice that will help you implement such a program and pick the right partner for your needs.

If you're interested in having Remote Medical International's team of experts help you mitigate your health and safety challenges, please contact us.



[www.remotemedical.com/services/staffing/safety-staffing/](http://www.remotemedical.com/services/staffing/safety-staffing/)



+1 (206) 686-4878



[info@remotemedical.com](mailto:info@remotemedical.com)

**LEARN MORE**

Speak with a representative about Remote Medical International services by calling +1 (206) 686-4878 or emailing [info@remotemedical.com](mailto:info@remotemedical.com). Visit us online at [www.remotemedical.com](http://www.remotemedical.com).

**REMOTE MEDICAL INTERNATIONAL**

4259 23rd Avenue West, Suite 200  
Seattle, Washington 98199