

Early Return to Work

Definitions

“Modified work” means redesigning job duties to match injured employee’s physical and mental restrictions as identified by the treating physician. Examples of job modifications include: new work hours (flextime, part-time); new duties assigned and/or old duties changed; new equipment acquired at work station; additional training.

“Time loss” means wage replacement benefit provided by workers compensation insurance. Worker is eligible for this benefit after three consecutive days off work authorized by a treating physician.

“Job analysis” is a written description of the physical demands of a job.

Individual Responsibilities

1. The human resource director will determine whether a modified work assignment can be provided which will be consistent with the treating physician’s work release and the needs of the district. Reasonable effort will be made to accommodate the needs of the employee by modifying his/her present work setting, however, work availability may make it necessary to transfer employees from one department to another at the discretion of the employer. The human resource director will be the liaison with the insurance company and medical provider.
2. The immediate supervisor will assist the employee with filling out the 801 form and arrange for first aid or transportation to medical care as needed. While the employee is unable to work, the employer will contact the employee by phone once a week to keep informed of the employee’s work status and to keep the employee informed of scheduling changes.
3. The human resource director will make sure the employee gets a copy of the Notice to Doctor Form to take to the doctor and be the insurance contact for payroll information.
4. It is the employee’s responsibility to report all injuries immediately and to provide the human resource director with accurate and timely information regarding the injury, physical restrictions as identified by their physician, and changes in his/her medical condition. Upon return to modified work, the employee will not work beyond the restrictions identified by their physician.

The following procedures will be followed in the event of a compensable disabling injury of an employee:

1. When feasible, injured employees will be given a physical status update form for completion by their physician. If not feasible, the district’s human resource director will deliver a form to the physician involved as soon as possible.

2. Employees who have received a full release from their physician shall provide a copy of that release to their supervisor upon returning to work. The supervisor will immediately forward the release to the human resource director.
3. For those employees receiving a restricted release from their physician, the human resource director will work with their supervisor to create a "light-duty" job analysis for a modified work assignment. This job duty analysis will be sent to the physician for his approval or changes light-duty work is defined as a temporary work assignment within a disabled employee's physical abilities/restrictions obtained from the employee's physician. The physical requirements of light-duty work are shared with the worker's physician to obtain concurrence that the proposed light-duty work is within the of physical capacity of the disabled employee light-duty positions are developed in consideration of the employee's physical capacity, the needs of the district, and the district's ability to offer light-duty work.

After a light-duty job analysis has been approved by the physician, a job offer letter will be mailed by certified mail to the employee to assign the light-duty position. The letter will include a copy of the signed Job Analysis/Work Release from the physician, the reporting time and date, wage rate, hours, duration of the light-duty assignment the location" and supervisor's name.

The employee will be asked to sign the bottom of the job offer letter indicating acceptance or refusal of the work assignment offered.

Upon completion, a copy of the job analysis, physician's release and job offer letter will be forwarded to the district's Workers Compensation Insurer.

An employee's verbal or written refusal of a physician approved light-duty job offer, or failure to report to work at the location and time indicated in the job offer may result in the district's insurer's reduction or termination of total or partial wage replacement. Refusal may also result in loss of re-employment by the district.

4. Continuation of temporary light-duty work assignments for disabled workers will be reviewed regularly by the human resource director and supervisor.

It is the responsibility of the employee, the supervisor and the business office to immediately notify each other if any problems arise with the light-duty work assignment. The supervisor will monitor the employee's recovery progress through regular contact to re-assess when and how duties may be changed. Any changes in work assignment will be made only after receiving concurrence from the employee's physician.

If an employee has a permanent disability which restricts his/her ability to return to regular work, the light-duty program may end. The district will determine whether a modified position exists and whether the employee will or will not be offered this or any other position as his/her new work assignment.

Notification of changes will be in writing with copies provided to the employee and the district's insurer.