

## **Early Return to Work**

The district encourages its employees to maintain safe work practices. However, should a work-related accident or illness occur, the following guidelines have been established to provide employees the opportunity to continue to work at a reduced capacity in an alternate light duty job.

This policy applies to all employees of the district.

If the employee sustains a work-related injury or illness which requires medical attention and prevents him/her from returning to his/her regular job, his/her medical status will need to be evaluated to determine if the employee is capable of performing temporary light duty work. Upon notification if an injury has occurred and medical treatment has been sought, a district administrator will promptly contact the treating physician to inform him/her of the district's return-to-work program and obtain a release for work. The district defines light duty work as a temporary modified work assignment within the injured employee's physical abilities.

When written approval to return to temporary light duty work is given by the treating physician, a district administrator will try to find a temporary light duty position for the employee, but is under no obligation to do so. Failure to accept a suitable light duty job may jeopardize the employee's entitlement to workers' compensation benefits.

If the employee is released and temporary light work is available which meets the medical restrictions established by his/her treating physician, the employee will be placed in a light duty job. While assigned to a light duty job, the district administrator will monitor medical progress as provided by the employee or their physician and coordinate communications among all interested parties to enable the employee to return as quickly as possible to his/her regular job.

Participation in the above provisions is limited to employees who have experienced a job-related injury or illness which temporarily prevents them from performing their regular job duties. If a non-work-related injury or illness occurs, other accommodations may be available under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as determined by the district on a case-by-case basis.

The employee may no longer qualify for participation if one of the following occurs:

1. There is a determination that the injury or illness is not work-related;
2. The employee is referred to vocational rehabilitation;
3. There is a determination that the employee is medically stationary but is still unable to return to their regular job duties;

4. The workers' compensation claim is settled or closed;
5. Failure to abide by all district rules, policies and procedures;
6. The treating physician determines that the employee will be unable to return to his/her regular job duties.

Employee Responsibilities for On-the-Job Injuries and Accidents:

1. Report all on-the-job accidents and injuries to the supervisor immediately. This should be done within 24 hours.
2. Any time the employee receives medical treatment that could require work restrictions, or require them to be absent from work, inform the principal or supervisor immediately. In doing this, the district can obtain information from the treating physician to determine the availability for work within outlined medical restrictions, or, anticipate how long the employee will need to be away from his/her regular job.
3. Once the employee's doctor releases him/her to return to work for temporary light duty or regular work, he/she must report to the building administrator or supervisor on the next scheduled work day.
4. It is the employee's responsibility to remain within any physical limitations established by his/her treating physician while working in a light duty capacity. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
5. It is the employee's responsibility to notify the building administrator or supervisor within 24 hours of all changes in his/her medical condition, physical limitations, and ability to perform his/her regular job duties.

END OF POLICY

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**Legal Reference(s):**

[ORS 659A.043](#)

[ORS 659A.046](#)

[OAR 436-110-0001 to -0900](#)

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101-12213; 29 C.F.R. Part 1630 (2006); 28 C.F.R. Part 35 (2006).

**Cross Reference(s):**

ACA - Americans with Disabilities Act

GAB - Job Descriptions