

Return-to-Work and Transitional Work Plan

The Return-To-Work Program supports the mission of the University by maximizing our human and financial resources. The program achieves this by helping campus employees who have work-related injuries or illnesses return to work as soon as possible.

Temporary modified work is provided for employees who are unable perform their usual jobs. It is the intention of the University to provide this work for all eligible campus employees as soon as possible following the onset of an industrial disability. The Return to Work Program utilizes a collaborative, consultative decision making process incorporating the services of disability benefit programs, Human Resources, the employee's supervisor and physicians, and other resources as appropriate.

Goals

- University concern for employees injured at work is demonstrated by assistance with their speedy recovery.
- Minimize the employee's transition period from partial disability to full duty.
- Maintain high workplace productivity.
- Prevent deterioration of employee work skills, conditioning, and attitudes that could result in extending periods of disability and decreasing morale.
- Reduce the disability costs of Workers' Compensation claims.

Transitional Work Assignment

A Transitional Work Assignment is a temporary work assignment which complies with all medical restrictions indicated by the employee's treating physician. It may involve modification of the injured employee's job duties, i.e., tailoring work duties to the injured employee's medical limitations and vocational abilities to maximize recovery, or alternate work that is compatible with the employee's job skills and experience.

The Transitional Work Assignment is documented by a Transitional Work Plan that is written for a period not to exceed 90 calendar days. The plan is signed by the injured employee and department supervisor or representative.

Eligibility

Employees with temporary medical restrictions are eligible for transitional work if they are expected to progress in their recovery from an industrial injury or illness and require temporary, short-term modification of their job duties. Employees with restrictions which permanently preclude them from returning to their usual and customary job are not eligible for participation in a transitional work plan.

Employees must obtain written medical documentation from their treating physician health care indicating their specific temporary work restrictions, including temporary limitations regarding the number of hours an employee can work, if such a restriction is appropriate.

In no event shall the transitional work for casual or temporary employees exceed the period of duration of the transitional, temporary appointment. All Transitional Work Plans must end no later than the last day of an employee's casual or temporary appointment.

PROCEDURES:

Report Injury: To ensure that proper medical treatment and referral to the campus medical provider is accomplished, supervisors should report all injuries to Human Resources immediately.

Communication: It is important that the injured employee, their supervisor, the treating physician and the Workers' Compensation Specialist communicate immediately after an injury and throughout the recovery process.

Initially the Workers' Compensation Specialist should notify the treating physician regarding the University Return to Work program. The employee must provide a doctor's note or work status report for their supervisor immediately following the appointment. The supervisor will then contact the Workers' Compensation Specialist to initiate the Return to Work process if appropriate.

Please note: Any discussions between the treating physician and the supervisor must be limited to information necessary to facilitate return to work. Diagnosis, prognosis, and most treatment information cannot be released without a demonstrable need to know.

Return to Work Committee: The primary function of this Committee is to engage in a collaborative, consultative decision making process to identify and create a temporary transitional work assignment that conforms to the temporary work restrictions. The committee will normally include the supervisor, Human Resources representatives, and other resources as appropriate

Transitional Employment Plan: As soon as it appears that the employee has temporary work restrictions and may be safely released back to work, the Workers' Compensation Specialist will arrange a meeting of the Return to Work Committee to develop of a Transitional Work Plan if possible.

An injured employee's compensation benefits may stop while the employee is doing transitional work, provided the number of hours being worked under the transitional job is equal to the employee's regularly scheduled work hours.

Full-time employees returning to a part-time transitional job may remain eligible for other compensation benefits. They may supplement transitional job earnings and compensation benefits with sick leave up to 100% of their regular earnings.

If an employee has questions, they are encouraged to contact our Workers' Compensation Specialist at ext. 2623.

Employees will be paid at their current rate of pay regardless of the transitional work assignment.

Employees participating in transitional work shall schedule medical appointments during non-working hours. Otherwise, with supervisor approval, sick leave or vacation time will be used.

Monitor Transitional Employment Plans: Modified, alternative jobs and work hours are temporary in duration, and subject to regular re-evaluation. With each medical re-evaluation, duties may be altered. Upon receiving additional information, the Return-to-Work Committee

may re-evaluate its ability to provide temporary, modified work, in keeping with the current determinations outlined by the physician.

Normally, an employee may remain on a Transitional Employment Plan up to a maximum of 90 days.

Transitional Employment Plan is not available: In some cases it will not be possible to develop a Transitional Employment Plan. Occasionally even temporary work restrictions cannot be accommodated. In this situation the employee will be eligible for Industrial Disability Leave or Temporary Disability benefits. The employee will continue on this benefit until either the employee's medical condition becomes permanent and stationary, or sufficient medical improvement occurs and the employee can then be accommodated through modified or temporary alternate work duty.

Employees who cannot return to regular employment: In some situations, an employee will be unable to return to their regular job because of the permanent, residual restrictions. Should this be the case, the appropriate University staff will evaluate the situation and refer the employee to appropriate alternative resources.

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CSU Channel Islands - One University Drive - Camarillo CA 93012 USA - Phone: (805) 437-8400

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