

RETURN TO WORK PROGRAM

Policy Statement

It is the policy of _____ to provide our employees with a safe and healthy workplace. If an employee becomes injured or ill because of a work-related injury, he or she will be offered a modified job assignment under our Return to Work (RTW) program and be able to work temporarily at a less demanding job than normally assigned. This program enables an injured employee to return to work as soon as possible (with the approval of the treating physician) and continue to be a productive and valuable employee.

The treating physician providing care for the injured worker will determine work limitations and/or restrictions that must be complied with when the worker is released to *modified* work. The treating physician's continuing evaluations of the employee's progress will determine when recovery is complete and when he or she can return to their regular work duties or job assignment. This program does not address permanent restrictions resulting from injury.

Responsibilities

Workers' Compensation Coordinator Responsibilities

_____ has been assigned as the Workers' Compensation Coordinator (WCC) in charge of the Return to Work program. The WCC has the responsibility to implement and administer our organization's RTW program, with management's full support and commitment.

The Workers' Compensation Coordinator's responsibilities can include:

- Develop a list of modified work tasks, jobs, or positions.
- Develop a list of job descriptions and specific tasks (and/or job hazard analysis [JHA]) to help the medical provider better assess an employee's ability to return to regular duties.
- Ensure that a relationship has been established with an appropriate medical provider who understands the intent of the program and modified work restrictions and is committed to working closely with the employer to ensure the best outcome for the employee.
- Act as liaison between employer, employee, managers, supervisors, medical provider, and the workers' compensation insurance carrier.
- Train all managers and supervisors about the importance of the importance of the RTW program and their roles in accommodating injured employees and contributing to a successful outcome.

Manager/Supervisor Responsibilities

- Assist the Workers' Compensation Coordinator in developing and maintaining a list of short-term jobs, positions, or tasks that will be available to offer to the injured employee.
- Review the restrictions or modifications to work tasks or job assignments with the employee and provide the necessary training before placing the employee in the new role/task.
- Monitor the employee's work area and ensure compliance with the treating physician's work instructions and evaluate work performance.
- Closely monitor the employee's daily tasks to ensure that the employee does not exceed the limitations set by the treating physician; determine and communicate to the Workers' Compensation Coordinator any new or additional modifications or changes that are deemed necessary.
- Contact the Workers' Compensation Coordinator promptly and advise him or her of any employee absences or if the employee is unable to report to their modified work assignment for any reason.

Employee Responsibilities

- Understand that modified work is a temporary assignment, not to exceed _____ month(s) without approval and is not to be considered a permanent job assignment. The intent of modified work is to gradually move an injured employee from restricted to full duty as soon as possible.
- Show up for work on time, follow your manager/supervisor's instructions, ask questions as necessary, and respect the fact that different departments have different work procedures.
- Do not perform work that exceeds the physical limitations set by your treating physician. If any activities produce and/or aggravate your current symptoms, you should stop the work assignment and report to your manager/supervisor, explaining your concerns. The manager/supervisor will contact the Workers' Compensation Coordinator and discuss what action needs to be taken.
- Follow the same time-keeping requirements required by your employer. This procedure is important to follow if you are to receive your correct pay on time.
- Call the Workers' Compensation Coordinator promptly and advise him or her of your absence if you are unable to report to your modified work assignment for any reason. **Be advised:** If you refuse a modified position offered by your employer and it is within the medical restrictions provided by your doctor, you may lose your disability coverage.

Return to Work Procedures

- Train employees, co-workers, and managers/supervisors how the RTW program works, describe their responsibilities, and explain why it is important to keep injured workers employed and productive.
- Understand that modified work is a temporary assignment, not to exceed _____ month(s) without approval and is not to be considered a permanent job assignment. The intent of modified work is to gradually move an injured employee from restricted to full duty as soon as possible.

- Contact the employee about upcoming medical appointment in order to make sure you receive the updated medical restrictions from the treating physician or clinic.
- Obtain an outline of the medical work restrictions (Work Status Report) from the treating physician or clinic.
- Maintain regular contact with the employee to customize and/or restructure the work assignment to allow for return to temporary modified duties with goal of eventual return to full duties.
- Promptly send a certified letter (using company letterhead) to the injured employee by certified mail informing the employee of the following:
 - Claim number
 - What the modified work is (the work must be within the medical restrictions provided by the treating physician)
 - When the job starts
 - Where the job is located

Email a copy of this letter to Republic Indemnity Claim Department at riclaims@ri-net.com or mail to:

Republic Indemnity
P.O. Box 4275
Woodland Hills, CA 91365-4275

- Evaluate and approve modified work at least every 30 days, or as recommended by the treating physician.
- Ensure treatment and therapy is continued as prescribed by the treating physician during the modified work assignment.
- Use the same pay rate as the employee had received while in his or her regular position.
- Provide modified work assignments that are as similar as possible to the original job. Do not select a job that is demeaning or demoralizing.
- Express your concern and empathy to the employee. Contact the employee regularly and ask about his or her condition and their satisfaction with the medical care and modified work (if assigned). Let the employee know he or she is missed by the company and fellow employees, and ask the injured worker about any special needs or problems.
- Send a get-well card to the injured worker.

For more information, please contact Republic Indemnity's Loss Control department at RICALC@ri-net.com.