



# WASHINGTON MILITARY DEPARTMENT PROCEDURES

Administrative Procedures 00-030-05

## WORKER'S COMPENSATION RETURN TO WORK PROCEDURES

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Employee:

- a. Before a return to full duty can be initiated or as soon as possible after the notice of release to return to light or modified duties, the employee must notify his/her supervisor and the Claims Manager that there is a change in their status.
- b. Adhere to work assignments and restrictions approved by the Health Care Provider (HCP), Supervisor and Risk Manager (RM).

2. Supervisor:

- a. Notifies Department Return to Work Coordinator (RTWC)/RM that employee is released to return to light or modified duties.
- b. Coordinates employee modified work requirements with work site supervisor if different from assigned supervisor.

3. RTWC/Supervisor:

- a. Consults with employee, HCP, and possibly the claims manager to obtain work restrictions and identify light or modified job duties.
- b. Provides written description of the light/modified duties to the HCP for approval/release.
- c. Establishes guidelines for communications with the Health Care Provider.
- d. Communicates concerns to HCP and solicits information for job placement from the provider.
- e. Does not assign duties to the employee that is not approved by the HCP.
- f. Provides employee with formal written notification of job assignment, duties, pay, etc. and the letter is forwarded to Risk Manager. The Risk Manager will forward a copy of the notification to the L&I Claims Manager and to the Department's Human Resources Office.

4. Supervisor:

Provides copies of the approved job description (approved by doctor and the Department) to the employee, Risk Manager, and the HR occupational health file with the offer of work, to include start date and rate of pay.

5. Employee:
  - a. Returns to work at light/modified duties within the parameters set by the Department and HCP.
  - b. Agrees to keep supervisor and RTW Coordinator informed of any changes in work restrictions.
6. Supervisor (or worksite supervisor, as appropriate):
  - a. Monitors RTW process, providing feedback to the employee and the RTW Coordinator.
  - b. Establishes a review date and determines how many days of modified duty will be allowed, obtains Division Director's approval as appropriate.
  - c. When the review date arrives, in consultation with the Risk Manager determines whether the injured worker should continue light duty, have duties increased, or should return to the regular attending physician. This decision should be in writing to the employee with copies to the Risk Manager and the Health Care Provider to lessen the possibility of misunderstandings.
7. RTW Coordinator:
  - a. Monitors the RTW process, medical management to determine if/when employee is able to return to normal job duties.
  - b. Communicates with the employee, HCP and industrial insurance claims manager.
  - c. If the employee is determined to be permanently unable to return to their permanent position, then RTW Coordinator refers the employee to the HR office for possible reasonable accommodations.
  - d. Considers referral to the statewide Return to Work Initiative Program.

After the injured employee is evaluated by the Health Care Provider, the supervisor should meet with the injured employee to discuss what work the employee is capable of performing. The following information should be considered when determining return to work options. Note: the Health Care Provider should determine what the employee's physical limitations are and what work is able to be done. The HCP should provide written documentation to the employee for discussion with the supervisor on work capabilities and limitations.

If possible, place the injured employee in a job using the following order:

1. Modification of current job at the employee's customary work site.
  - a. Focus on the aspects of the job that the employee can do.
  - b. Have co-workers fulfill activities that are not within the physical limitations of the injured worker, as outlined by the Health Care Provider.
  - c. Reviewing a pre-determined high priority list of tasks that are designed for modified duty. Modifying the employee's regular job is preferable. It allows the employee to maintain contact with peers and continue with a regular routine.

2. Different job in current division or work unit.
3. A job in different division (depending on limitations).

If the employee is assigned a shorter work day: i.e. two to four hours, it is preferable that the work start at the beginning of the shift. This will help maintain a regular work routine. Try to maintain the employee's regular work shift. Avoid the perception that a modified job offer is either punitive or rewarding.

These procedures allow for the earliest possible return to work for Departmental employees. It is anticipated that the disruption to normal business and to the employee's regular duties are minimized as much as possible.

These procedures will be reviewed and updated on a regular as needed basis.

  
Timothy J. Lowenberg  
Major General  
The Adjutant General  
Director, Washington Military Department

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Date