

1100.6 University Return to Work Program

Modified Duty Assignment for Temporarily Disabled Employees

The university's Return to Work Program assists any employee who, because of a temporary physical or mental disability resulting from an industrial or personal injury/illness, cannot perform the duties normally assigned to their position and may require a temporary modified duty assignment. Modified duty, also known as transitional work, is a set of temporary tasks that match an individual's physical abilities and allows the employee to continue working while recovering from an injury. Modified duty is transitional in nature and will change as an employee's physical abilities change. Modified duty can be full or part-time.

The Return to Work program is designed to:

1. Reduce workers' compensation costs and promote return to work,
2. Enhance physical and emotional ability to work, and,
3. Improve quality of work life.

Risk Management and Insurance (RMI), General Services Building, Colorado State University administers the program. For information, RMI, 491-4834. Forms are available from Environmental Health Services and Risk Management and Insurance website at <http://www.ehs.colostate.edu/WWorkComp/Home.aspx>. The Facilities Management Personnel Office may be contacted at 491-0051.

Upon return to work after a serious injury or illness, an employee must provide a written release (Fitness to Return to Work) by a licensed physician and/or psychiatrist. The release shall indicate the employee's ability to return to regular or temporary modified duty assignment. If modified duty is indicated, the physician and/or psychiatrist shall specify the work restrictions and the duration (dates) restriction(s) apply. Form is available in the Facilities Management Payroll/Personnel Office.

Departments may elect to have an employee examined by a designated physician when the employee has been away from work for an extended period of time due to an injury or illness, or the employee is being released to work with medical restrictions, and clarification is needed. The department will provide the physician with the tasks the employee will be expected to perform. The examination will be coordinated through Risk Management and Insurance, Colorado State University, when the employee has an ongoing Worker's Compensation claim or coordinated through the department (at the department's expense) when it is classified as an injury/illness which is not work related.

If the designated physician releases an employee to work with medical restrictions, the physician shall notify Risk Management and Insurance, Colorado State University (if work related) and the department to which the employee is being returned to modified duty (if not work related) to specifically identify the restrictions. An employee released with no restrictions shall report to their normally assigned work duties.

An employee released with restrictions shall report immediately to his or her department with appropriate documentation completed by the physician, specifying the work restrictions and the duration (dates) of the restriction(s).

Departments may assign the employee to modified duty, if an appropriate assignment is available, and instruct the employee where and when to report for work. If the employee is returning from a work related injury/illness, Risk Management and Insurance will immediately notify Human Resource Services by phone, fax, or mail to effectuate changes in industrial claim payments.

Departments will provide injured employees with appropriate modified duty. These assignments need not be identified in advance, but will be determined by the need of the department. Length of time for modified duty assignments shall be as long as improvement is made or until reaching maximum medical improvement. There is no minimum length of time for modified duty.

If no alternate duty assignment is available in the employee's department or any other department on campus with the work restrictions stipulated by the physician or the alternate duty assignment has ended, the employee will be placed in the appropriate leave status. While temporarily assigned to the alternate duty assignment program, the employee will be paid at his or her regular base pay.

All employees released to return to work must comply with all university guidelines relating to the Return to Work Program. Failure to comply may result in corrective/disciplinary action.

Placement of Employees with Permanent Restrictions

At the end of improvement or reaching maximum medical improvement, if an employee is determined to be unable to return to his or her regular position, the department is responsible for bringing this determination to the attention of Human Resource Services and CSU's Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action. All state and university requirements will be adhered to in determining the status of the employee.