



OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

POLICY TITLE: Early Return to Work Program	AUTHORIZED BY: Kelvin L. Simmons Commissioner
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ISSUED: July 2011	REVISED:

I. General Statement

The Early Return to Work Program (ERTW) was created in part to maintain the Office of Administration's skilled workforce and reduce costs associated with workers' compensation injuries. This policy supplements the Office of Administration's policy B-20 pertaining to workers' compensation.

This program enhances the recovery of employees who are injured or sustain an occupational disease in the course and scope of their employment with the Office of Administration (OA). When an employee's restrictions are identified and documented by an authorized treating physician as specified by the Central Accident Reporting Office (CARO), employees will be placed in temporary modified duty assignments during the course of the recovery to perform duties consistent with temporary limitations. Under very rare circumstances there may not be an appropriate temporary modified duty assignment available.

OA Human Resources will be responsible for facilitating the ERTW.

All OA executives, managers, supervisors and staff shall maintain confidentiality of any and all employee medical information.

II. Scope

The ERTW applies to all OA employees who experience injuries or work-related illnesses that are covered under the Missouri Workers' Compensation Law, Chapter 287, RSMo.

The injured or ill employee should be placed on modified duty based on the employee's medical restrictions. Modified duties are temporary. The authorized treating physician identifies and documents the employee's restrictions and authorizes returning the employee to regular duties.

III. Goals of the Program

The goals of the ERTW are to: 1) return the employee to work at the earliest possible time; 2) foster and enhance the physical and psychological recovery process for the employee; 3) minimize the chance of re-injury; 4) enhance the injured employee's sense of confidence and well being; 5) increase productivity by fully utilizing the experience, knowledge and energy of the employee; and 6) reduce workers' compensation costs.

IV. Modified Duty



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- A. Employees must fully understand that modified duty assignments are temporary, usually as a part of the rehabilitation program, and that they will be expected to return to their regular duties as soon as medically able.
- B. Modified duty assignments shall be reviewed regularly by the supervisor and OA Human Resources. A review shall be conducted at least every thirty days.
- C. Modified duty assignments are expected to last no more than three months. However, longer periods of rehabilitation and the associated temporary modified duty assignment may be used in exceptional circumstances. These situations will be handled on a case by case basis.
- D. It is the department's goal to accommodate the employee's temporary restrictions. While a temporary modified assignment cannot be guaranteed to the employee, an assignment will be offered if available, and if possible, within the employee's division. If a suitable assignment cannot be found within the employee's division, every effort will be made to find a suitable temporary assignment within another OA division. Only as a last resort should leave with pay be utilized.
- E. In order to ensure that an employee and supervisor reach a clear understanding regarding a temporary modified duty assignment, the supervisor shall complete the Early Return To Work Temporary Modified-Duty Assignment Form, available from OA Human Resources.
- F. Any injured or ill employee who refuses a modified temporary duty assignment may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, consistent with any applicable laws.
- G. In all cases, employees participating in the ERTW remain in their regular positions and job classifications and continue to receive regular wages and accrue benefits as usual. Seniority, lay-off rights and other employee rights remain intact.

V. Employee Responsibilities

Employees must:

- A. Comply with all authorized treating physician's orders, including those related to restrictions and return to work.
- B. Promptly provide the supervisor with any written documentation from the authorized treating physician regarding temporary or permanent work restrictions or authorization for the employee to return to full work status.