



LOUISIANA DELTA

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Title: Transitional Return to Work

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I. PURPOSE

The health and well-being of all of our faculty and staff employees is of great importance to Louisiana Delta Community College. It is well documented that injuries affect the whole person and that effective rehabilitation and treatment must address the whole person. Part of that treatment includes keeping physically and mentally active within the restrictions of a particular injury. Louisiana Delta Community College will make every effort to help employees facilitate their recovery and early return to work.

II. APPLICABILITY

Consistent with the general intent of Senate Concurrent Resolution 50 of the 1997 Regular Legislative Session regarding a Return-to-work Policy for employees on Worker's Compensation, Louisiana Delta Community College will make a reasonable effort to return to the workplace those employees of the college who have sustained job-related injuries or illnesses and are temporarily prevented from returning to regular employment. To return an employee to the workplace, LDCC will make reasonable efforts to place the returning employee into a meaningful assignment while he or she is on a light/limited duty on a temporary basis.

Louisiana Delta Community College does not guarantee placement and is under no obligation to offer, create, or encumber any specific position for the sole purpose of offering placement. All final decisions regarding placement shall be made by the Appointing Authority of Louisiana Delta Community College.

This policy is not intended to interfere with the procedure applicable to employees who are eligible for reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Should an employee be eligible under the ADA (i.e., an employee having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual, and with or without reasonable accommodation is qualified to perform the

essential functions of the position), the division head should contact the Department of Human Resources for guidance.

The first priority for any placement offered will be within the employee's division/department. The second priority will be for placement in another division of the college. This policy applies to all employees of LDCC.

III. GOALS OF TRANSITIONAL WORK PROGRAM

- A. To provide the earliest possible safe return to the work site for employees who have sustained job-related injuries or illnesses.
- B. To give employees more options in returning to work rather than waiting for a release to return to regular duty.
- C. To retain qualified employees within state government thus utilizing their training and experience.
- D. To facilitate a safer working environment by taking more responsibility for injured workers.
- E. To reduce medical costs of worker's compensation claims due to extended work absences.
- F. To reduce indemnity payments of worker's compensation claims when employees could be performing transitional services for the citizens of Louisiana.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION/EARLY RETURN TO WORK PROCEDURE

The initial consideration for returning to work will be made by the employing department. In many cases, the employee's own department should be able to find a suitable fit. However, where the employing department cannot make a suitable fit or cannot return the employee to work, a return to work team made up of personnel listed below will assist in trying to help injured employees during the recovery process.

An injured employee reports his/her injury immediately to their supervisor. All paper work should be completed as soon as possible and the injured employee maintains contact with his supervisor when the injury involves lost-time. The employee also provides regular updates to his supervisor on at least a bi-monthly basis. The injured employee will be allowed to return to a modified duty arrangement when it is within medical restrictions set by the treating physician.

Senior Payroll Specialist is designated as Return to Work (RTW) Coordinator for LDCC. The LDCC return to work team will consist of the following members with their respective duties:

Immediate Supervisor/Department Head and/or Vice Chancellor of College (Not to exceed 2 members)

- Initiates immediate medical treatment for injured employee when necessary;
- Conducts investigation and corrects hazard;
- Reports the injury and completes all needed paperwork as soon as possible;
- Informs employees of department work rules and practices;
- Maintains contact with the injured worker and the Department of Human Resources;
- When appropriate, finds or develops modified work for employee within medical restrictions;
- Identifies and offers modified duty assignment to the injured employee;
- Determines specific job tasks and suggest appropriate job modifications;
- Concentrates on returning the employee to work activities that are based on physical limitations and transferable skills.

Director/Assistant Director of Human Resources and Representative from ORM

- Facilitates all return to work activities;
- Reviews all forms for full completion by correct persons;
- Informs the injured worker of benefit options, rights, and responsibilities;
- Maintains contact with the injured employee;
- Maintains contact with the ORM;
- Assists in the development of modified duty assignments;
- Maintains injury records and history;
- Makes safety recommendations when necessary;
- Reviews injury data and analyzes to spot trends of injuries and accidents;
- Develops and implements employee safety training programs;
- Assists with the development of modified duty assignments;
- Acts as liaison for all interested parties;
- Meets with the supervisor to determine specific job task and suggest appropriate job modifications;
- Concentrates on returning the employee to work activities that are based on physical limitations and transferable skills;
- Assists in planning safety training for the department.

Return to Work Team

Upon receipt, the return to work team will review the physician's certification to determine whether it indicates any restrictions. They will then assess how such restrictions are likely to impact the employee's ability to perform his or her duties. If a question exists as to such ability, the employee's division (with assistance from the Department of Human Resources if needed) will communicate with the employee's physician. This communication will include:

1. a letter requesting the medical facts to support the doctor's certification of the employee's restrictions and a medical prognosis as to the duration such restrictions will apply;
2. a copy of the employee's position description;
3. a statement indicating the extent of physical and/or emotional demands normally encountered by the employee or other similarly situated employees in the performance of their work, such as bending, lifting, climbing stairs, pushing, pulling, walking, handling of heavy items, deadline demands, high-volume public contact, etc.
4. The employer reserves the right to obtain a second medical opinion on the employee's condition at the employer's expense.

Upon receipt of any additional information regarding the restrictions from the employee's physician, return to work team will determine whether the employee can:

5. return to a full work load and schedule without modification of duties;
6. return to a full work load and schedule with temporary (six months or less) or permanent modification of duties;
7. return to work at a less-than- full schedule temporarily, but without modification of duties;
8. return to work at a less-than-full schedule temporarily, with temporary (six months or less) or permanent modification of duties; or
9. return to work in a different position for a limited period of time not to exceed six months.

The return to work team will make an analysis to determine whether another position is available. Any temporary change in schedule or duties is to last for a period not to exceed six months. At the six-month limit, an assessment by the return to work team is required. Note: Six months in B.2, B.4, and B.5 means six months after physician signs off on certification form.

1. If the return to work team determines that a change in hours or duties are necessary, a decision will be made whether the employee's job can be altered or whether a temporary reassignment can be made to return the employee to work. Consideration will be given to:
 - a) the severity of the employee's condition and the extent to which his or her ability to work is impaired;
 - b) whether the employee's condition is temporary or permanent, and if temporary, for what duration it is expected to continue;
 - c) the extent to which regular job duties or hours may be temporarily or permanently altered to permit the employee to return;
 - d) the impact of any alteration in hours or duties on the productivity, workload, or work environment of other employees;
 - e) the availability of alternative work assignment.

If the return to work team determines an accommodation can be made, it must notify the Appointing Authority of such accommodation. In finding or developing a modified duty position, the following should be considered:

- o Remember to take a positive approach and focus on what the employee can do rather than tasks he/she cannot perform;
 - o Explain to the employee the benefits of modified duty, including little or no loss in earning power; continued earnings of sick leave, vacation, and retirement constant communication with supervisor and co-workers, and feeling of being part of the team;
 - o Modified duty should be a meaningful assignment by allowing injured employees to maintain their dignity;
 - o The employee may be able to do the regular job with only some tasks removed because of medical restrictions;
 - o The employee may be able to do tasks that have been put off because "no one has time" to do them, tasks that are not being done by others at the present time, or jobs that are being done only occasionally;
 - o Ensure that employees and their co-workers fully understand that this is temporary work, and that the injured employee will be expected to return to her/his full job as soon as medically able;
 - o It is the policy of college generally not to allow overtime status to individuals working under this program; however, it shall be at the employing unit's discretion as to whether the employee's restrictions permit overtime work;
 - o Review the assignment regularly and contact the treating physician if necessary.
2. In the event the division cannot accommodate the employee, it must notify the return to work team and submit written reasons for the determination. A review of the determination and of potential temporary assignments, both within and outside the division will be made by the return to work team.
 3. If an employee cannot return to his or her former employing division, the return to work team will work with the employee in an attempt to place the employee in another position with the college that is commensurate with the employee's restrictions and job skills. The employee's department will be responsible for the wage and benefit costs during the period of time the employee is placed temporarily outside the division.
 4. In the event an employee refuses an accommodation or reassignment to duties which are within the employee's restrictions and ability to perform, the employer is not obligated to provide alternatives.

Applicable forms can be obtained from the Department of Human Resources.

List of Essential Duties
Physician's Certification