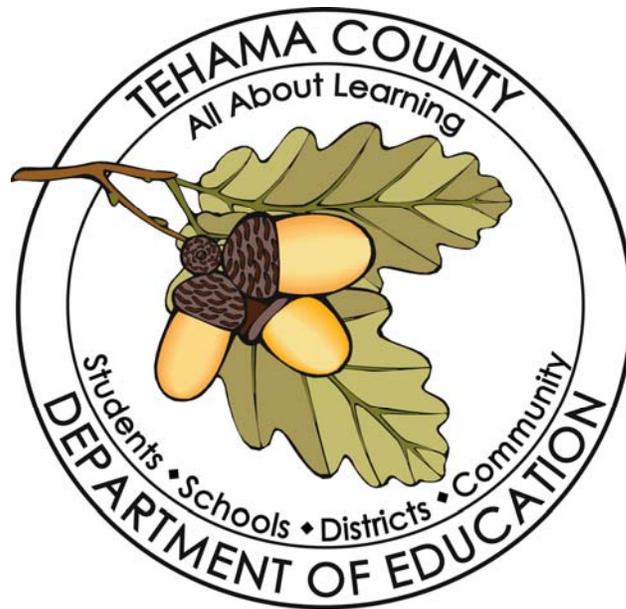


Tehama County
Department of Education

Return to Work Program



DEVELOPED APRIL 2003
REVIEWED MAY 2009
UPDATED NOVEMBER 2013

TEHAMA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MODIFIED RETURN-TO-WORK PROGRAM

INTENT OF PROGRAM

The Modified Return-to-Work Program is intended to assist an industrially injured employee to regain the ability to perform the essential functions of his/her job. Modified work assignments are temporary assignments to light duty to assist the injured or ill employee to progressively escalate to full duty status. This type of duty is a "transitional" process; normally no more than 90 days, which enables the employee to gradually resume their full-time duties. The assignment to temporary modified work is a transitional process only and is not intended to establish permanent "light duty" assignments or displace other employees.

BENEFITS OF ESTABLISHING A MODIFIED RETURN-TO-WORK PROGRAM

Modified work enhances both psychological and physical healing, thus shortening the period of time until the employee is returned to full capacity within their normal job. Mental attitude and rehabilitation depend to a large extent on the employee's attitude toward work, their supervisor, and their employer. If these conditions are tolerable, work is an excellent form of mental therapy. The employee moves from a disability environment with disability stimulus, to a work environment with a wellness stimulus.

Physicians in the field of rehabilitation admit that the difference between success and failure is more frequently a factor of mental attitude rather than physical symptoms. Minimizing lost time and disability are the primary purposes of this program.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

The Assistant Superintendent, Human Resource Services will be the designated Return-to-Work Coordinator. The responsibilities of the Return-to-Work Coordinator will be to:

- Locate, monitor and place injured employees in temporary modified assignments.
- Determine job modifications or develop alternative modified work assignments.
- Inform employees, supervisors, and medical treatment facilities of the temporary modified assignments.
- Discuss/review the program with supervisors. They will be paramount to effective supervision of the employee while in a temporary modified assignment.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

- A report of the employee's work injury is completed on site and forwarded to the Human Resource Services Department at the Tehama County Department of Education.
- The employee is sent to the designated medical facility. The designated medical facility will know that the Tehama County Department of Education has modified work assignments available.
- Once the employee receives treatment for a work-related injury, he/she shall provide the Department with medical verification of his/her physical condition, including limitations, anticipated date of release, and the types of modification requested. Unless the physician gives the employee a full release, the employee may be considered eligible for temporary modified work. If the physician does not specify work restrictions, the Superintendent or designee may contact the physician to see if modified or light-duty work might be appropriate. (SP 4113.4)
- Human Resource Services Department will schedule a conference to be held between the designated Return-to-Work Coordinator, employee, and regular supervisor to determine if the employee can return to his/her regular job within the restrictions.
- If employee cannot return to his/her regular position with modifications, a temporary modified work assignment will be developed by the Return-to-Work Coordinator, within the parameters indicated by the treating physician for work restrictions.
- If no modified assignments can be developed/procured, the employee will be placed on temporary disability, sick leave, or other available leave until an appropriate modified position within the restriction is found, or restrictions are lifted.
- Human Resource Services Department will send written information notifying the employee of a temporary modified assignment within five (5) days from the oral notification. The notice shall include that temporary modified work assignments shall only be granted for limited periods of time not normally exceeding 90 days.
- In providing a temporary modified assignment, the Department of Education will typically assign employees to perform tasks that are at or below their current assignment. This does not preclude the Department from assigning modified duties that are not normally part of the employee's regular job assignment; e.g., a maintenance, custodial, transportation, or school site employee may be assigned clerical duties or vice versa.
- If the employee refuses the work in the temporary modified assignment, temporary disability payments, sick leave, and other leaves will be subject to approval of the Human Resources Department and the Superintendent. (AR 4261.11)

OTHER:

Human Resource Services Department staff shall monitor all injured employee's "date of release" pursuant to their medical verifications and return them to their regular job assignments as soon as possible. Human Resource Services Department, in collaboration with the Return-to-Work Coordinator shall monitor an employee with an "Off Work Order" from the treating physician for a possible return to a temporary modified assignment.

TYPES OF TEMPORARY MODIFIED ASSIGNMENTS:

The purpose of the Tehama County Department of Education's Return-to-Work Program is to allow the Department to implement a flexible program that will benefit both the injured employee and the office. It is imperative to keep this purpose in mind when identifying temporary modified work assignments.

If medical restrictions are minor, regular job duties can be modified to accommodate the employee's restrictions. As restrictions become more specific, the assignments will also become more specific and defined. Each case will be evaluated on an individual basis.

There are overflow tasks and activities throughout the Department in various individual departments, which can be assigned on a temporary basis to an injured employee. Having these tasks completed would benefit the Department, as well as provide the injured employee an opportunity for early return to work.

The Return-to-Work Coordinator will survey department heads to identify possible temporary modified work assignments and determine interest in receiving employees on modified work assignment. Temporary modified work assignments may include any or all of the following as determined by the Return to Work Coordinator and department managers:

1. The employee's same work unit and same job, but within restrictions.
2. The employee's same work unit but different job tasks within the restrictions.
3. A different work unit and different job tasks within restrictions.
4. A variety of work units with varying tasks within the restriction.