

Timely Return to Work is Impactful

- The timely return of injured employees to productive roles in the workforce is one of the key components of a successful recovery. Return to work is a responsibility shared by management and employees.
- Bringing an employee back to work early is therapeutic and can speed the overall recovery of the employee injury. The longer an employee is away from work after an injury, the harder it is for them to return to work; and the longer an employee is away from work, the higher costs related business need.
- Injured employees who do not return to work are not earning wages, so there are no weekly benefits being paid such as health insurance and retirement. Effectively returning an injured employee back to work reduces the employee personal financial and family consequences of unnecessary lost time.

Return to Work Practices

- Employees injured on the job or on leave must return to work as soon as medically allowed.
- Written work restrictions from a medical provider outline the physical limitations for an employee's return to work. **Return to work forms must be provided to the supervisor and the Workers Compensation Coordinator prior to return. This allows for evaluation of restrictions and determination of job modification needs.**
- Restrictions are in place until the treating physician or independent medical examiner indicates the employee has modified restrictions, or until the employee has reached a plateau in their healing process or "end of healing".
- Every employee who has to take days off due to injury/illness maintain contact with their supervisor and have an understanding that they will be expected to return to work within restrictions prescribed by the treating physician or independent medical examination.
- Each supervisor must provide a welcoming environment for the employee returning to work.
- Supervisors will remain in contact with injured employees who cannot come back to work so as to maintain a positive employer–employee relationship.
- Employees returning to work after an injury will be assigned job tasks within the prescribed restrictions. As appropriate, with the assistance of human resources and supervisor, the institution will take the necessary steps to find work for the employee within the restrictions.
- Job tasks may change as restrictions are modified. Evaluation will be an on-going process in those instances.

The following progression will be used for prioritizing the placement of an employee returning to work following Family & Medical Leave for self, Leave of Absences for self, or a work related injury:

1. Job tasks within the employing department
2. Job tasks within the employing Division
3. Job tasks within the University

If at any time there are questions or concerns regarding the return to work restrictions or length of healing, the Workers Compensation Coordinator will work with supervisors to determine the next steps.



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Workplace Evaluations

- The institution safety officer may be called upon to perform a job task analysis to assure the assigned duties are within the prescribed restrictions identified by the treating physician. Job tasks may change as restrictions are modified. The safety officer will work with the supervisor and human resources representative to identify the physical demands of the essential job functions as appropriate.
- Some tasks may have to be redesigned for the return to work to prevent further injury.

Employee and Supervisor Responsibilities

- Maintain communication regarding restrictions, including length of time and next physician evaluation date.
- Verbal notifications are not enough. Written notifications of restrictions providing detail of abilities are required for each visit in order to effectively evaluate modification needs. If no restrictions apply, provide a slip indicating such.
- Provide return to work slips to the Workers Compensation Coordinator and keep them informed of modifications or concerns.
- **Return to work slips may be directly faxed from the physician to the Workers Compensation Coordinator – 920.424.0875. The slips will be shared with supervisors but the employee must still communicate directly with the supervisor on their status.**