

Transitional Return to Work Program Highlights

Background

After accident prevention, a Transitional Return to Work (TRTW) program is the best tool to control worker's compensation costs and reduce losses. TRTW programs have been proven to work in state agencies, the public sector, and private firms across the nation.

The key to success of return to work programs is early intervention. The response at the time of the illness or injury has a profound impact on the outcome of most cases. TRTW actions should start as soon as possible. However, because specific illnesses or injuries may need differing amounts of healing time, the time limits on TRTW should be flexible and based on the medical judgment of the treating physician.

Purpose

The University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh has designed and developed a TRTW program that:

- Maintains dignity and work status of the employee
- Assists in ensuring the injured employee receives the best practical medical care in order to speed the recovery and return to work
- Returns the employee to his/her original position as soon as possible
- Assists in early evaluation of potential long term disability cases to determine transitional job placement, rehabilitation or retraining needs when appropriate
- Treats all injuries as legitimate unless investigation reveals different evidence.

The program is designed to help the University minimize the actual medical and disability costs of injuries while providing a positive and supportive environment to employees. It is the goal of the program to return the injured employee to his/her position as quickly as possible, or find alternative productive work activities.

Return to Work Evaluation

This evaluation process should be considered for employees returning due to Family & Medical Leave (FMLA) and worker's compensation injuries/illnesses.

When a supervisor receives a return to work form from an employee, he/she should be evaluating any restrictions with the current job duties to determine if modifications can be made. If modifications are available, you may work with Human Resources to complete a TRTW Agreement with the understanding this is not a permanent change in duties or expectation.

The length of the TRTW Agreement or modification of duty is determined by the date provided on the return to work form from the physician. If no date is provided on the form, supervisors should request a date of re-evaluation from the employee.

It may not be necessary to complete a TRTW Agreement. It is encouraged to contact Human Resources for guidance whenever necessary.

Questions?

Contact Human Resources, 920.424.1166; hroffice@uwosh.edu