

TEMPLATE

(INSERT STATE AGENCY NAME) DISABILITY MANAGEMENT/RETURN TO WORK PLAN

1. GOAL

To provide a standard operating procedure for (*insert state agency name*), third party claim administrator and injured worker to follow in attempting to place an injured worker into a temporarily modified or alternate duty assignment during the recovery period of a reported workers' compensation claim.

2. BENEFITS

Administering a disability management/return to work plan provides benefits to both the injured worker and the state agency. Statistically, employers that facilitate return to work programs, have a higher percentage of injured workers achieving full recovery than employers who fail to provide such programs. Additionally, employers that utilize disability management initiatives have lower direct costs associated with workers' compensation than those who do not.

3. DURATION: The duration of the Temporary Modified or Alternative Duty assignment shall not exceed 180 (*may be less*) calendar days or when a medical work disposition changes the injured worker's status. In no circumstance shall Temporary Modified Duty or Temporary Alternate Duty become a permanent condition of employment for an injured worker within their existing job classification.

4. DEFINITIONS

Injured Worker: A (*insert state agency name*) employee who initiates a workers' compensation claim pursuant with the State of Connecticut and agency injury reporting requirements.

Work Disposition: Work status of the injured worker relating to the workers' compensation claim as outlined by the physician, either on a Worker Status Report or other medical disposition form.

Candidate: An injured worker who is capable of working a temporary modified or alternate duty assignment.

Temporarily Totally Disabled: Work disposition from physician outlining that the injured worker is not capable of any form of gainful employment.

Temporary Modified/Restricted Duty: Work disposition from physician outlining that the injured worker is not capable of their regular duty but is capable of working in a modified or restricted capacity within their normal job classification.

Temporary Alternate Duty Assignment: Established tasks that injured workers can be placed into when the restrictions are such that prohibits the injured work from returning to their normal job classification, but with physical restrictions.

Regular Duty: Work disposition from physician outlining that the injured worker is capable of returning to work without restrictions or modifications to their normal job classification, i.e. returning to work regular duty.

Permanent Restrictions: Work disposition from physician outlining that injured worker is capable of gainful employment but has permanent restrictions for part or all of the tasks within their current job classifications.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

State Agency is responsible for:

- Committing the agency to managing a disability management/return to work process for the benefit of the State of Connecticut and our workforce.
- Dedicating a department/division of the agency to administering a return to work plan.
- Communicating the Disability Management Return to Work process to the agency workforce.

Disability Management/ Return To Work Division is responsible for:

- Working with Human Resources & Labor Relations to make sure that collective bargaining agreement language regarding light or restricted duty is not violated.
- For divisions of an agency that have high frequency injury rates, develop temporary alternate duty assignments for injured workers to be placed in when restrictions are such that prohibit their return to their normal job classification with restrictions. The temporary alternate duty assignments should be developed with supervisors of the high frequency injury rate units. [*Click here for example*](#)
- Identifying Return to Work candidates.
 - Candidates are established through the receipt of a medical work disposition slip or worker status report from the attending physician or independent medical examiner outlining a work disposition of temporary modified/restricted, alternate or regular duty.

- Work disposition reports are received through either of the following:
 - The third party claim administrator
 - The injured worker
 - Directly from the physician to state agency
- Review work disposition to establish candidate's status as either
 - Regular Duty
 - Temporary Modified Duty
 - Temporary Alternate Duty
 - Temporarily Totally Disabled
 - Permanent Restrictions
 - Note: You may need to communicate with the workers' compensation claim adjuster for proper placement within either the Temporary Modified or Alternate Duty categories
- If the injured worker has a Temporary Modified/Restricted or Alternate duty work disposition, coordinate the return to work process by:
 - Contacting the supervisor to facilitate the injured worker's return to work as a participant in the Disability Management/Return to Work plan. Communicate if the injured worker will be returned to an alternate duty or restricted duty position identifying any physical restrictions that need to be afforded the injured worker in the discharging of the tasks within the assignment.
 - Attempt to make phone contact with injured worker to offer employment within the program.
 - Send confirmation of employment letter to record telephone arrangements for participation. Copy the TPA adjuster.
 - If you fail in making phone contact or if participation volume dictates, send Offer of Employment letter to document your offer of employment within the program. Copy the TPA adjuster.
 - [Click here for Sample Letter](#)
 - Conduct regular meetings with your TPA adjuster to review the work disposition status on an ongoing basis. These meetings can become part of existing DAS, Agency, TPA file reviews. If your agency currently does not have these type of file reviews because of your size or volume, contact

DAS at (860) 713-5002 and DAS will facilitate the status of your out of work employees.

- Once an injured worker has been returned to a modified/restricted or alternate duty assignment, it is critical to always properly discharge all Core-CT Time and Labor functions to properly record the return to work within the system.
 - Refer to the Job Data and Time Sheet sections of the DAS Core-CT Processing Manual for specific coding and system processing procedures.
- Maintain regular contact with supervisors for the following:
 - Provide updates on injured workers participating in the program
 - Garnish ideas for better operating program
 - Creating additional Temporary Alternate Duty positions.
- Maintain a log of all participants within the program with corresponding commencement dates and expiration dates.

Injured Worker is responsible for:

- Immediately notifying supervisor and following all other established workers' compensation claim reporting procedures.
- Obtaining immediate medical attention unless the claim is a Report Only and no medical attention is required.
- **If you lose time from work, relating to a reported workers' compensation claim, immediately notify your supervisor, agency workers' compensation office, and the agency disability management/return to work office (if other than the agency workers' compensation office). Always present your worker status reports/slips to your agency after physician office visits.**
- Contact the disability management/return to work office with any questions regarding the return to work process, policy, and procedures. Provide any feedback that will enhance your return to work assignment and/or the overall process.

Supervisor is responsible for:

- Assisting the injured worker in obtaining immediate medical attention if needed.
- Complying with all agency claim reporting requirements for an injured worker under your charge.

- Immediately notify and forward the agency workers' compensation office if you are presented with a medical work disposition or worker status report from your injured worker.
- Assures that the injured worker is actively meeting the restrictions while working in a restricted or alternate duty position.
- Contacting the return to work office with any questions regarding the disability management/return to work process.

Third Party Claim Administrator is responsible for:

- Supplying candidates to the Disability Management/Return to Work Office
- Filing WCC Form 36 with Workers' Compensation Commission stating the intent to discontinue workers' compensation because of an offer of employment in either alternate or modified/restricted duty. Provide a copy of this form to the agency workers' compensation office.
- Managing the file after the injured worker has been placed in restricted or alternate duty to obtain a regular duty work or permanent restriction work disposition.
 - Notify disability management/ return to work office upon any work disposition change for a return to work participant.
- Participating in file reviews on all lost time and return to work claims