



Office of the Mayor
City of Columbus
Ohio

**CITY OF COLUMBUS
TRANSITIONAL RETURN TO WORK PROGRAM (TRWP)**

Policy

It is the policy of the City of Columbus to effectively manage its workers' compensation and disability programs and invoke cost containment measures for City claims while maintaining the working status of its employees. The Transitional Return to Work Program (TRWP) provides restricted and/or alternative work assignments (based on physician's recommendations) after the onset of a work related injury, accident, illness or non-work related short-term disability.

Procedures

A. Participation

Upon request of the City, the employee shall participate in the TRWP unless precluded from participation from his/her attending physician. Reasonable efforts will be made to provide temporary work assignments for employees who:

- Had sustained an occupational injury or illness or a reoccurrence/exacerbation of a pre-existing condition or have a non-work related short-term disability.
- Have been released by their attending physician to participate in a TRWP.
- Have the potential of returning to the original job and performing all the essential job functions after recovery.

The employee and supervisor will receive written terms of the work arrangements from the department/division Human Resources (HR) designee prior to the implementation of the program. The document will include only the work restrictions provided by the employee's attending physician.

B. General Guidelines

1. Program participation is based on the documented recommendation of the employee's attending physician.
2. Terms of the transitional return work arrangements shall be in writing (form attached).
3. All program assignments have a maximum duration of ninety (90) days.
4. The program period will begin with the date of release to restricted work established by the attending physician and will end upon the removal of restrictions or at the end of the ninety (90) day period, whichever comes first. Continuation of the program shall require on-going documentation of medical necessity and participation in the program may be discontinued at any time.

C. Types of Transitional work Programs

1. Gradual Return to Work: Employees who are capable of working a minimum of twenty (20) hours or more per week will be granted participation in gradual return to work. The remaining time will be paid through injury leave, workers' compensation, disability or other available leave balances. Employees are expected to show progress towards recovery.
2. Temporary Work Assignment: Employees may receive a temporary and changing work assignment during their recovery period based on the limitations of the employee as documented by the attending physician.

D. Personnel Policies and Procedures

All participants in the transitional return to work program will comply with all personnel policies, procedures and safe work practices. Employees are required to follow all established injury policies and procedures.

E. Rates of Pay and Release Time

The employee will be paid at the regular hourly rate of pay while participating in the transitional return to work program. Employees who are required to attend physical therapy or doctor appointments shall use appropriate injury leave or sick leave as specified in their collective bargaining agreement/salary ordinance or are encouraged to schedule those appointments during non-working hours. Any illness or injury, which is permissible under FMLA, shall be subjected to the twelve (12) week per year limitation for the length of an FMLA leave.

F. Role/Responsibilities of Employee

1. Obtain a MEDCO 14 Form (Attached) from the work site HR office.
2. Provide the attending physician with the MEDCO 14 Form and communicate with the medical provider that the City of Columbus has a Transitional Return to Work Program and can accommodate most restrictions.
3. Submit the MEDCO 14 Form and/or any medical restrictions or work capacity information and continue to provide all relevant information from on-going treatment to the worksite HR office.
4. Work within the restrictions and communicate to the team when job duties fall outside those restrictions or cause discomfort. *(NOTE: Each department and/or division shall establish a transitional work team. The Team shall be comprised of representatives from the department/division HR and the department/division management. Refer to page three (3) for more information on the team)*
5. Communicate with the team on any progress.

G. Role/Responsibilities of Medical provider and Managed Care Organization (MCO)

1. Participation by the medical provider/attending physician will be primarily through documentation to the MCO.
2. The Managed Care Organization (MCO) will assist in obtaining work restrictions and/or limitations from the attending physician and provide them to the HR representative and Employee Benefits/Risk Management Section of the Department of Human Resources (EBRM).
3. Monitor claims to ensure the employee is receiving appropriate medical care.
4. The MCO will provide bi-weekly assessments of the employee's progress towards full capacity in his/her position and report the analysis to the HR Representative and to EBRM.

H. Transitional Return to Work Program TEAM

Each department and/or division shall establish a transitional work team. The Team shall be comprised of representatives from the department/division HR and the department/division management. The Team shall be responsible for determining suitable temporary work assignments based upon physical limitations provided by the employee's attending physician and for meeting with the employee, and the employee's union representative, if the employee desires, to discuss the transition plan arrangements. ***Confidential medical information and/or documentation shall be protected in accordance with all laws governing the use of such information.*** Each member of the team shall be fully trained in all areas of the Transitional Return to Work Program.

Human Resources Representative

The department/division HR designee will provide the employee with the appropriate transitional return to work forms; will review all forms to ensure that they are fully and accurately completed and will forward all necessary paperwork to EBRM and to the MCO. The HR representative will work with the employee's supervisor to identify and communicate the work restrictions, provide the employee with a written document outlining the return to work arrangements (form attached) and ensure the employee is performing only those duties allowed in the TRWP arrangement. The HR representative will participate in a review of the employee's progress and track and report all TRWP hours to EBRM. EBRM will receive, certify and administer injury leave, disability leave and workers' compensation claims. They will also assist in the training and education of the Transitional Return to Work program and provide all TRWP hours on a quarterly basis to the Department of Human Resources Director.

Management Designee

The management designee will validate the job description and work with the HR representative to determine temporary work assignments for the participating employee; will work with the local health and safety representative to ensure that the employee is utilizing safe work practices; will monitor/review the employee's progress and will coordinate the return to full duty with the HR representative as determined by the attending physician.

Duration

Each transitional return to work assignment is based on medical need and has a maximum duration of ninety (90) days. Continuation of the program shall require on going documentation of medical necessity.