

Title: Transitional Return to Work Policy

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Date of Last Revision:

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Cancellation:

Office: Safety & Security

Transitional Return to Work Policy

Purpose

Pursuant to Louisiana Revised Statute 39:1547 and the Louisiana Office of Risk Management's General Safety Program requirements, this policy has been developed to establish the guidelines for all work-related injuries that have occurred while employed at South Louisiana Community College (SLCC). SLCC provides workers' compensation benefits to its faculty and staff. This coverage includes a modified duty program designed to encourage employees to return to work on a modified duty status.

Scope

This policy will be used at all SLCC campus locations throughout Louisiana for all injuries that occurred while working at SLCC. This policy applies to all employees who have sustained a job-related injury.

This policy is not intended to instruct the procedure applicable to employees who are eligible for reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), or leave benefits under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Inquiries about the eligibility under the ADA or FMLA should be directed to the Human Resources Benefits Coordinator.

In the event an employee refuses an accommodation or reassignment of duties (outside the employee's FMLA benefit eligibility period) which are within the employee's restrictions and ability to perform, SLCC is not obligated to provide alternatives. In such a case, SLCC will notify the State Office of Risk Management (ORM) which may result in termination of the employee's workers' compensation benefits.

Goals of Transitional Return to Work

Injured workers should be returned to gainful employment as soon as medically possible after a job-related injury or illness. The program shall:

- Provide a safe return to work for occupationally related injuries or illnesses.
- Give employees return to work options.
- Provide suitable accommodations for employees who have sustained an injury or illness that impacts their ability to perform all aspects of their pre-injury job or pre-illness job.
- Retain qualified employees.
- Facilitate a safer working environment.
- Reduce the duration of time needed for the employee to transition back to full duty.

- Retain valuable employee work skills, physical conditioning.
- Reduce workers' compensation claims reporting process.
- A process of semi-annual reports to the legislature and the governor.

Implementation Plan

A successful transitional return to work plan shall be based on medical prognosis and recovery. Transitional work shall be available until an employee is able to resume full duty employment or up to one year. Unforeseen medical issues shall be referred to the ORM's Third Party Administrator's (TPA) Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.

Reporting a Work-Related Accident/Illness

Once an injury/illness is reported by an employee, SLCC will:

- Report work related injuries or illnesses immediately via the TPA's claims system.
- Provide employee with a Physician's Modified Work Information Sheet to provide to the treating physician.
- Refer the injured employee to the Occupational Medical Clinic chosen for the agency, or
- Allow the injured employee to seek treatment with a physician of choice.

Transitional Return to Work Team

SLCC shall have a transitional return to work team to review all lost-time workers' compensation employees under its authority.

Team Scope:

- Complete transitional return to work plans
- Review of job modifications
- Job tasking
- Task identification
- Comply with the state's requirement for transitional return to work plans
- Oversight of plans
- Facilitate success of plans
- Report transitional return to work program results

Team Composition:

- Human Resources Payroll & Benefits Manager
- Immediate Supervisor of Injured Employee
- Safety Coordinator and/or Safety & Security Director
- Executive Director of Strategic Engagement & Employer Services
- ORM Third Party Administrator
- Human Resources Benefits Coordinator (RTW Coordinator)
- Vocational Rehab Counselor (provided by TPA as needed)

Responsibilities

Chancellor (or designee)

- Shall ensure that all SLCC campus locations adhere to this plan.

Vice Chancellor of Administration & Finance (or designee)

- Shall ensure that the Human Resources department adheres to this plan.

Human Resources Director (or designee)

- Participates on the Return to Work Committee.

- Shall work with the RTW Coordinator, Safety Coordinator, and Safety & Security Director to maintain records and documentation of all cases.
- Informs the injured worker of benefit options, rights, and responsibilities.
- Assists in the development of modified duty assignments.
- Meets with the injured employee supervisor and the RTW Coordinator to determine specific job tasks and helps make recommendations for appropriate job modifications.
- Shall review the return to work program with existing employees annually.
- Shall review the return to work program with all new hires during the new hire orientation.

Safety & Security Director

- Participates on the Return to Work Committee.
- Shall ensure that all new hire employees review this plan.
- Shall ensure that all current employees annually review this plan.

Safety Coordinator

- Serve as the liaison between SLCC and the ORM to ensure all documentation is provided to any outside agency as needed.
- Maintain all records associated with all claims in coordination with the RTW Coordinator.
- Ensure that all action items from each claim are completed and closed.
- Ensure that the Transitional Return to Work Audit Form DA WC4000 is completed and maintained.
- Assist with policy review to all new hire employees.

Return to Work Coordinator

The Return to Work (RTW) Coordinator is the primary contact for employees on matters related to disability management and return to work planning. This includes but is not limited to:

- Responsible for the overall coordination and day-to-day administration of the disability management program.
- Develop, facilitate, and monitor RTW program.
- Develop and facilitate accommodations.
- Work with the employee and the employer to facilitate RTW programs.
- Monitor RTW plan and provide progress reports to appropriate individuals.
- Ensure that the Physician's Modified Work Information Sheet is completed and maintained.

Injured Employee Supervisor

- Participates on the RTW Committee.
- Maintains contact with the injured employee and updates the RTW Coordinator as required.
- When appropriate, finds or develops modified work for the employee with medical restrictions.
- Identifies and offers the approved modified duty assignment to the injured employee.
- Determines specific job tasks and suggests appropriate job modification to the RTW Committee for approval.

Injured Employee

- Reports injury and any changes to their health immediately to supervisor.
- Completes and returns all needed paperwork as soon as possible to the RTW Coordinator.
- Follows SLCC rules and practices.
- Maintains contact with their supervisor.
- Provides regular updates, at least bi-weekly, on status of ability to return to work their supervisor and RTW Coordinator.

- Returns to offered modified, transitional, or alternate duty which is within their medical restrictions as set by the treating physician.
- Follows physician's instruction on return to work restrictions.

Frequency of Team Meetings

The Transitional Return to Work team shall meet monthly or when an employee is injured and/or there is a change in the injured employee's medical status. Team meetings will not be necessary if there are no active lost time claims.

Job Tasking

Job tasking is the process of detailing each specific job task performed in a position. If assistance is needed with job tasking, please contact ORM's TPA. Job tasking should begin before the accident occurs, or

- Once an injury has occurred that leads to lost time.
- Complete job tasking for each position of injury that results in lost time.
- Consult with first-line supervisors.
- There is no need for repetition of job tasking with each new occurrence.
- Compile a master list of transitional tasks for each position.
- Maintain a file of job tasks for each position for which a lost time claim has occurred.

Accommodation Types

Modification of job tasks, equipment, or schedules for up to one year, or when IW has been released to return to work, to assist an injured worker transition to return to work. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

- Modified Work – Includes modification to the job tasks, functions, hours of work, frequency of breaks, worksite, or any combination of these.
- Alternate Work – Different from the employee's pre-injury job or illness offered to a worker who is temporarily or permanently unable to perform their pre-injury work.
- Transitional Work – A group of tasks or specific jobs that can be performed until the worker is capable of returning to full pre-injury duties.

Transitional Return to Work Plan

A transitional return to work plan should be completed with the supervisor of the injured employee and a representative from the RTW team to include:

- Specific job tasks identified
- Hours to be worked
- Duty assignment
- Physical restrictions
- The plan shall be reviewed and approved by each member of the team.

Eligibility for Return to Work

When reviewing an individual worker's eligibility for return to work options, the following criteria should be followed:

- Assess the job task of the worker's pre-injury position.
- Identify transitional tasks that can be performed with the employee's current physical restrictions.
- Review other services or tasks that can be performed which would improve the overall function of the agency.
- Review tasks that can be performed that would return an employee to gainful employment.
- Employee must provide Benefits Coordinator with the Physician's Modified Work Information Sheet.

The ORM's TPA will be available to identify transitional return to work tasks if needed.

Before the Return to Work

SLCC will hold a return to work meeting with the employee to review the plan before the employee returns to work. Once the meeting has taken place, an offer of transitional duty employment shall be made to the injured employee in writing. If the injured employee is represented by counsel, the notice shall be sent to the employee via counsel.

Employer Responsibility

- Provide a good detailed job description that includes the physical demands and essential functions of the job.
- Treat the injured worker with dignity and respect.
- Reflect state values and guiding principles – create a positive atmosphere where the employee knows they are valued.
- Promote an open, cooperative process including maintaining regular contact with the employee.
- Work with RTW Coordinator to develop a suitable RTW plan for the employee and stay within the outlined abilities/limitations.
- Monitor the progress of the employee through the RTW plan and involve the RTW Coordinator if there are any changes in circumstances.
- Promote and enforce safe work practices.
- Visibly support the RTW program.
- Ensure a work environment that is conducive for a successful RTW program.

The Return to Work Offer

The offer of transitional return to work employment shall include the following:

- Offer must be made in writing
- Certified mail return receipt request
- A specific return to work date and time
- Duty assignment
- Who to report to
- The employing agency shall provide transitional employment for up to one year or until that employee has reached maximum medical improvement whereby he can return to his previous job, whichever is less.

Employee Responsibility

- Return the Physician's Modified Work Information Sheet to the immediate supervisor within 24 hours or prior to the next scheduled shift.
- Accept the transitional return to work offer.
- Report to work as requested in the return to work offer letter.
- Work within the restrictions provided by the physician.
- Comply with medical treatment and keep all scheduled medical appointments.
- Advise the immediate supervisor and the RTW Coordinator if the transitional work is physically too difficult.

After the Employee Has Returned to Work

When an employee returns to work on transitional duty employment, SLCC shall not require the employee to perform tasks that have not been approved by the treating physician.

- Evaluate the plan every 30 days to assess the employee's ability to return to full duty.
- The ORM's TPA will be responsible for communications with medical personnel.

- SLCC shall not have direct contact with the treating medical personnel without the approval of the ORM's TPA.

Termination of Employment

SLCC should notify ORM's TPA if a person is at risk of termination due to exhaustion of sick leave.

- Termination of employment because an injured worker has exhausted sick leave shall be evaluated as a "last resort method."
- Maintain documentation of failed transitional return to work employment.
- Maintain documentation of efforts made to identify transitional return to work tasks.
- Maintain documentation of barriers in identifying transitional return to work.
- SLCC shall include evidence that transitional return to work tasks could not be identified.
- Notify the RTW Coordinator for ORM's TPA when an injured worker is removed from work or the accommodations are no longer available.

Measure of Effectiveness

The attached Transitional Return to Work Audit form (DA WC4000) shall be used to measure the effectiveness of the agency's transitional duty employment program.

Information to be tracked shall include the following:

- Number of workers injured per month
- Number of lost-time days from work-related injuries per month.
- Number of employees returned to work on transitional employment duties. (Include employees who have resigned or who have been terminated.)
- This information is tracked as long as the employee is receiving workers' compensation indemnity benefits.
- Lost-time days for those employees will be tracked as an average of 21.5 days per month.

This report will be reviewed by the Loss Prevention section of the ORM's TPS during SLCC's annual loss prevention audit.

Policy Review

- Annual review is required with all existing employees or immediately if the policy is revised.
- New hire employees shall review the policy during new hire orientation.
- The policy will be reviewed and updated annually or as needed.

Attachments:

- Transitional Duty Employment Audit Form DA WC4000
- Physician's Modified Work Information Sheet

References:

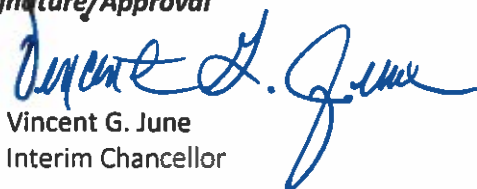
- LA R.S. 39:1547
- Louisiana Office of Risk Management's General Safety Program requirements
<https://www.doa.la.gov/orm/PDF/General%20Safety%20Program-red.pdf>

Review Process:

	Reviewing Committee/Entity	Review Date(s)	Approval Date	Effective Date
	Committee for Institutional Policy Review	05/19/2020	06/10/2020	
	Executive Committee	06/11/2020	06/25/2020	06/25/2020

Chancellor's Signature/Approval

SIGNATURE:



Vincent G. June
Interim Chancellor

DATE:

*6/25/20***Final Distribution:**

Distribution: Electronic: posted to College's website and sent via email to College personnel
Hard copy: Original to Executive Assistant to the Chancellor for Master Policy Binder,
copy to Chair of Committee of Institutional Policy Review