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# SAMPLE RETURN-TO WORK PROGRAM

## PURPOSE

Our company is committed to returning injured employees to work in a timely manner to control costs and ensure a return to a productive lifestyle.

Our company will take whatever reasonable steps are necessary to satisfactorily return the employee to a position of employment after the injury. Every effort will be made to provide transitional work for injured employees who need job modifications in order to return to work. The injured employee will be returned to work at the earliest opportunity after the injury and after he or she is physically able to do so.

## SCOPE

In order to administer this return to work program, the workers' compensation coordinator will complete the following:

1. Review the completed Physician's Return To Work Status Report.
2. Contact physician immediately after the employee's initial medical visit if the Physician's Return to Work Status Report is not returned, and request return to work information.
3. Contact the physician by phone if clarification is needed on the return to work information.
4. Provide, as necessary, written job descriptions to the treating physician.
5. Establish a return to work date and work schedule, and designate the job assignment.
6. Talk with the supervisor about the employee's return to work and structuring the transitional work accommodation.
7. **Note:** Once the medical restrictions are obtained, the workers' compensation coordinator will contact our Human Resources Personnel or the workers' compensation coordinator and they will complete the job placement coordination and transitional work assignment.
8. Confirm job offer by letter if disability absence is longer than six months. Include date the employee is expected to return and the position description. (cc to the insurance company and workers' compensation insurance company). **Note:** This is an important employee communication and also provides documentation if needed at a later date.
9. Send/receive the Physician's Return To Work Status Report to the supervisor.
10. Confirm immediately with the insurance company when the modification cannot be met so that they can initiate other plans for managing the disability (outside placement job training, transferable skills).
11. **Note:** In all cases our company requires a written medical authorization before return to work can occur.

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## RELEASES

Employees may be released for usual duties or transitional work. If the employee returns to work in a transitional work position, workers' compensation coordinator will:

1. Monitor the medical information as needed, but never more than 30 days between contacts, to obtain a full release.
2. Request as needed medical information follow up.
3. Advise the insurance company when a full medical release is received. **Note:** It is critical to follow up to obtain, if possible, full medical release. The elimination of work restrictions will manage the potential for a further claim during lay off periods.

## COORDINATION OF RETURN TO WORK

### A. Our Company's Coordination

In order to focus on managing employees back to work during this initial 180-day period of disability, our company will:

1. Maintain contact with the employee
2. Maintain contact with the treating physician
3. Maintain contact with the insurance company's claims person
4. Assess job duties for potential modification

While providing coordination of return to work, our company will consider the following state rules:

1. Provide return to work coordination for a maximum of six months (180 days) from the date of injury.
2. Assist when the insurance carrier completes the initial Disability Status Report (DSR) for filing with the Commissioner by promptly responding to their requests for information. **Note:** the insurance company must file this report within 14 days if a disability is known to last 13 weeks from date of injury or within 90 days of injury date.
3. The insurance carrier will request a waiver of rehabilitation consultation on this initial DSR if the employee is expected to return to work within the 180 days.
4. If return to work does not occur within 180 days, a second DSR must be filed by the insurance company and the employee is then referred for a rehabilitation consultation

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## B. Selection Criteria For Return to Work Coordination

Our company will provide their return to work coordination on all lost time cases and other situations where this coordination is appropriate.

## C. Responsibilities

1. Our workers' compensation coordinator will provide this coordination and formulate the plans for timely return to work.
2. Our company representatives recognize that timing is a critical part of the process and will always consider the following:
  - Immediate discussions with the insurance carrier when it appears return to work at our company is unlikely.
  - Continue discussion with the insurance carrier to obtain/provide rehabilitation updates.
3. Our workers' compensation coordinator will work through the entire claim process until it is completed with our workers' compensation insurance carrier.

## D. Rehabilitation

1. The following are considerations for establishing an employee rehabilitation consultation by a Qualified Rehabilitation Consultant (QRC):
    - Employee is **not able** (due to medical restrictions and reasonable accommodations) to return to work at our company.
    - An employee has been disabled more than six months (180 days).
    - Employee has requested rehabilitation consultation.
  2. To initiate a rehabilitation consultation, workers' compensation coordinator will:
    - Contact the insurance carrier.
    - Initiate this discussion immediately if an employee will be unable to return to work at our company.
  3. The following may then be initiated by the insurance carrier:
    - Coordinate a QRC assignment to complete a rehabilitation consultation.
- **Note:** The QRC provides the rehabilitation consultation and develops a Rehabilitation Plan that coordinates placement outside of our company.

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## WORKERS' COMPENSATION REPORTING PROCEDURES

**A. Educate all employees before a work injury occurs in our company claims reporting procedures.**

1. **The employee** - Report any incident that results in injury immediately to your immediate supervisor. There are no exceptions to this rule.
2. **All employees** - To be aware that timely medical care is critical in emergency situations and to know how to initiate this response per site orientation information.
3. **The supervisor** - Report the injury to the site workers' compensation coordinator and assist with the completion of the employee's report.

**B. Additional Reporting Requirement**

1. **The employee** - Report to immediate supervisor all near misses that could have caused injury or property damage. There are no exceptions to this rule.
2. **The supervisor** - Complete the appropriate incident report and send to the workers' compensation coordinator at our company's main office.

**C. The medical procedures to follow after an injury occurs:**

The supervisor will:

1. Ask the employee if he would like to obtain first aid or medical treatment.
2. Note: If it is an emergency situation, handle with emergency response procedures.
3. Identify the **nearest preferred medical provider location** and provide this information to the employee. Note: This information may be posted at all job locations.
  - a. Our company primary preferred medical provider is:

Clinic Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

*(Note whether the clinic does regular office care, emergency care and provides after hours service.)*

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- b. In addition to this primary location, a second clinic is available:

Clinic Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

- c. If at these specific job locations:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please use:

Clinic Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

- d. For after hours care, please use:

Clinic Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

4. Designate a driver if the employee requires assistance or have emergency medical transportation (i.e. ambulance) called if necessary.
5. Provide the departing employee with a copy of the Physician's Return To Work Status Report (when appropriate).
6. Advise the employee that they need to be provided the completed medical forms to bring back to work for our workers' compensation coordinator or their supervisor to review.
7. Call the clinic to advise them that the employee is on the way to the medical facility.

Clarify that the employee is responsible to:

1. Transport himself/herself for medical care if injury allows. Otherwise, medical transportation for the initial visit will be provided as determined by the supervisor.
2. Return to work immediately following the physician's examination and give a completed Physician's Return To Work Status Report to the supervisor, who will forward it to the workers' compensation coordinator. **Note:** If due to the time of day unable to return to work, must provide the medical report the next workday.
3. The injured party must call the workers' compensation coordinator and their supervisor if they do not have a full-time work release or not released for work before leaving the medical facility and provide the doctor's evaluation paperwork and forms to the workers' compensation coordinator within 24 hours. If

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due to time of day unable to call during working hours, employee must call the workers' compensation coordinator and provide the doctor's evaluation paperwork within 24 hours.

4. Stay in touch with the workers' compensation coordinator based on initial phone discussion.

## **D. Accident investigation procedure to follow after an injury occurs:**

The supervisor will:

1. Complete immediately the Supervisor's Report of Incident. This report is the basis for the completion of the First Report of Injury.
2. Investigate the incident following the company safety investigation procedures.
3. Request that the employee complete the Employee's Accident Report within 24 hours.
4. Meet with the employee (within 24 hours), review the completed Employee's Accident Report, sign off on this report, and provide the employee with a copy of the completed form.
5. Encourage the employee to stop and think what he can do to prevent future accidents.
6. Send the Employees' Accident Report and the Supervisor's Report of Incident Investigation to the workers' compensation coordinator.

**Note:** If the employee does not immediately complete their report, send the Supervisor's Report of Incident without the employee's report.

7. Keep a file copy of the report form for your records.
8. Call the workers' compensation coordinator on all serious injuries or what could have been serious injuries and discuss the incident.
9. Call the workers' compensation coordinator on **all** serious lost time injuries and discuss return to work issues.

The supervisor will:

1. Assist employee in completing the Employee's Accident Report.
2. Encourage the employee to stop and think what he can do to prevent future accidents.
3. Review and sign off on completed Employee's Accident Report.

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## E. Overview of claims reporting procedures to follow after an injury occurs:

Workers' compensation coordinator will:

1. Complete the First Report of Injury within 24 hours of receipt of report on all injuries based on Supervisor's Report of Accident Investigation.
2. Call immediately if the injury is life threatening or results in death, the workers' compensation insurance carrier.
3. Send the original First Report of Injury to our insurance carrier:

Company \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax \_\_\_\_\_

4. Send a copy of the First Report of Injury to our Insurance Agency:

Agency \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax \_\_\_\_\_

5. Attach a separate memo to the First Report of Injury if additional information is supplied to the insurance carrier.
6. Retain a copy of the First Report of Injury, Supervisor's Accident Investigation, and the Employee's Accident Report and place in the Workers' Compensation Injuries Filing System.

## F. Administrative procedures to follow on all claims:

Workers' compensation coordinator will:

1. Maintain a workers' compensation file on all injuries.
2. Maintain all forms and ensure that forms are filled out promptly and fully completed.
3. Notify Insurance Company immediately when an employee returns to work.

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## G. Claims management procedures when an injured employee is expected to lose three or more days from work:

Workers' compensation coordinator will:

1. Contact the employee at home to confirm that he is recovering from the injury and assure him that a job should be available upon his medical release to return to work.
2. Maintain Telephone Log (See Forms Section) which includes date of call and who talked to.
3. Maintain regular periodic contact with the employee when the absence from work continues for an extended period of time.
4. Coordinate the employee's return to work. Limited duty work (transitional duties or part time hours) should be considered for an injured employee who has been medically released to work with physical limitations.
5. Advise injured parties' supervisor **immediately** when an employee returns to work and any restrictions employee may have.
6. **Note:** If the employee is not treating with a preferred medical provider:
  - Call to the treating physicians for clarification on the disability and to discuss modified duty.
  - **Note:** Our company Physician's Return to Work Status Report should be used to obtain information from the treating physician.
  - Schedule an exam with our company's preferred medical provider.
7. Contact the insurance company's workers' compensation representative if having concerns about return to work or other issues.

The workers' compensation coordinator will also:

1. Contact our Workers' Compensation Insurance Company if accommodations for return to work cannot be made.
2. Notify our workers' compensation insurance company if the injured employee is not release for work in any capacity (full or modified duties) within three days of the absence from work.
3. Notify our workers' compensation insurance company about any discrepancies or concerns regarding claims as soon as you are aware of them. **TIMELY NOTICE IS CRITICAL IN CLAIMS MANAGEMENT.**