



# **GEORGIA STATE BOARD OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

[www.sbwc.georgia.gov](http://www.sbwc.georgia.gov)

## **BEST PRACTICES**

### **EARLY RETURN-TO-WORK PROGRAM**

July, 2007

## **Why Do I Need A Restricted Duty Job Program?**

### **Best Practices**

1. Return injured employees to meaningful employment.
2. Utilize employees' work skills during their period of partial disability.
3. Maintain a good employee attitude by providing meaningful employment.
4. Maintain communication with employees.

### **Benefits**

1. Helps the injured employee maintain income levels.
2. Eliminates employees' fears concerning future employment.
3. Controls workers' compensation costs.
4. Reduces need for attorneys in the workers' compensation case.
5. Reduces employees' complacency caused by sitting at home.
6. Providing meaningful transitional-duty employment should help reduce workers' compensation fraud.
7. Employees return to work sooner.

## **How Do I Develop A Transitional-Duty Job?**

### **Best Practices**

1. Identify jobs with physical demands consistent with restrictions placed on the injured employee by the physician.
2. Evaluate the essential functions of all jobs so you can identify portions of a job which would be within the physical restrictions of your injured employee.
3. Develop a written job description of the transitional-duty job.
4. Involve all the participants, (i.e. employees, supervisors, managers, physicians, company nurses, etc.), to develop an appropriate job.
5. Make sure the job is meaningful and productive.
6. Avoid isolation from other employees.
7. Be flexible regarding work and time limitations imposed by physicians. Some employees may be restricted to reduced hours.
8. Maintain consistent, continual employment.
9. Be sure the job is developed prior to the time you need it.
10. Be flexible about department and shift.
11. Be sure appropriate transitional duty is available when needed.
12. Establish an appropriate pay for a transitional-duty job. Temporary partial disability benefits will compensate for reduced earnings during the transitional duty.
13. Be creative in developing transitional-duty jobs.
14. Review the Early Return-To-Work Program available on the Board's website, [www.sbwg.georgia.gov](http://www.sbwg.georgia.gov).

### **Benefits**

1. Job description will be available when the need arises.
2. Employee returns to work sooner.
3. Doctors, employees and management will have a better understanding of the job requirements.
4. Employees will accept the job more readily once it is clearly defined.
5. Assures your consistency in return-to-work programs.
6. Will help credibility with doctors, lawyers and judges in workers' compensation cases.
7. Employees return to full-duty work sooner.

## **How Do I Implement A Transitional-Duty Program?**

### **Best Practices**

1. Obtain physician's permission based on job description.
2. Communicate with all participants, (i.e., employees, supervisors, managers, nurses, physicians, etc.), to assure a safe and successful return to an appropriate transitional-duty job as approved by the physician.
3. Complete form WC-240, Notice to Employee of Offer of Suitable Employment, and send completed form to the employee and his/her attorney, if they are represented. Send a copy to the Board.
4. Be flexible in matching the job to the injured employee.
5. Make sure the job is available.
6. Inform the supervisor when the injured employee is returning to work.
7. Provide necessary medical and nursing assistance during the transitional-duty time.
8. Educate the supervisor concerning the importance of the transitional-duty job. Also make sure the supervisor and employee understand and follow the physician restrictions.
9. Make sure the physicians know and understand the essential functions of the job (on-site evaluations, video presentations, written job analysis, etc.).
10. Provide an appropriate work area.
11. Notify your insurance company, agent, third-party administrator or claims office when the employee returns to transitional duty.

### **Benefits**

1. Safer return to transitional-duty work.
2. Employees return to work sooner.
3. Better understanding by all parties involved.
4. More successful conclusion to the claim.
5. Provides a closer, more personal relationship with health care providers.
6. Helps to maintain your credibility with the physician when the physician knows that you will provide appropriate work.
7. More cost effective than letting the employee sit at home.
8. Should help reduce litigation.

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