

SAFETY IS YOUR JOB!

RETURN TO WORK KIT



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What Employers Need to Know

Return to work (RTW) simply means helping your employee get back to work as soon as possible after a work-related injury or illness. Developing the culture and business processes to support RTW is not achieved overnight. The process includes developing policies and procedures, educating workers about early reporting of injuries, and working with supervisors to look creatively at job tasks and essential job functions.

Workers' compensation claims involving time off work can drive up your costs. However, for the vast majority of claims, steps taken early can speed the employee's recovery and reduce claim costs.

A successful RTW program:

- demonstrates a caring response to the employee.
- encourages workers to attempt RTW and provides necessary support.
- where possible, ensures injured workers return to their pre-injury job or matches them to meaningful work.
- explores the use of a range of techniques to encourage RTW.
- develops strategies to prevent a non-RTW focus, particularly on injuries that have lower RTW rates such as psychological injury and sprains/strains/hernias/dislocations.
- does not pressure workers to perform unsuitable duties.
- avoids situations that are typically associated with an initial failure of the first attempt to return to work such as too much pain, re-injury at work, no suitable duties, poor psychological preparation of worker, poor support from co-workers, and meaningless or uninteresting duties.

Why is this important? Including workers in the RTW planning and providing a clear understanding of suitable duties programs results in less time off on workers' compensation. It is important to start discussions about returning to work as soon as possible after injury. In particular, it is important for employers to:

- consider the RTW details stated in the current medical certificate or report.
- communicate with the treating physician to clarify restrictions or discuss RTW options.
- discuss RTW options and issues with injured workers.
- initiate discussions about RTW rather than leaving the initiation to workers.
- involve senior managers in discussions where possible.
- actively involve injured workers in RTW planning.
- provide workers with a clear understanding of RTW duties.

Healthcare providers such as occupational therapists, physiotherapists, and psychologists may be needed to identify suitable duties. They may also need to participate in RTW discussions with the employer and worker to develop a written suitable duties program particularly for workers with complex or serious injuries.

Return-To-Work Program Overview

What it is and why your organization should have one

A return-to-work (RTW) program is a planned and organized system to provide temporary, transitional, modified jobs to employees who are injured on the job. RTW reintroduces employees to meaningful employment and productivity sooner than would have been otherwise possible. RTW benefits injured employees by accommodating their physical restrictions and allowing them continuity in their work lives. It benefits employers by increasing morale and productivity and lowering the costs associated with workplace injuries—including the cost of workers' compensation.

The cost of workplace injuries and illnesses can be staggering to an employer. Creating a safe work environment is the first and most critical step in reducing costs. If an employee, however, is injured on the job, a RTW program is essential in mitigating costs and supporting the organization's safety mission by:

- assisting the employee's recovery and rehabilitation.
- returning the employee to his or her regular position sooner.
- increasing productivity by reducing lost workdays.
- increasing morale and motivation and promoting goodwill within the workplace.

Employers have control over a significant portion of their workers' compensation costs, and best practices recommend that employers implement a RTW program as part of a comprehensive safety and cost containment initiative. Industry data suggests that an effective RTW program can reduce claim costs by 10% to 20%. In addition, your organization receives the benefit of the work performed.

A successful RTW program relies on clear, frequent communication and collaboration between the employer, the injured worker, medical providers, claims adjusters, and other professional service providers such as case managers and sometimes even attorneys. Below we have outlined the roles and responsibilities for each of these.

Senior Management

It must be clear to all employees that senior management is committed to the RTW program.

Senior management:

- sets the RTW policies and procedures.
- ensures that the RTW program is effectively communicated to everyone.
- provides necessary staffing and financial resources for the RTW program.
- tracks results and communicates them.

RTW Coordinator

The employer's RTW coordinator holds a very responsible position in the RTW chain of communication. The coordinator is a designated person responsible for facilitating the RTW process.

The RTW coordinator:

- educates employees on the RTW program, policies, and procedures.
- trains staff, particularly supervisors, on their RTW program responsibilities.
- coordinates and maintains the relationship with the medical providers to ensure an effective RTW program.
- maintains close contact with the claims adjuster.
- maintains frequent contact with the injured employee.
- directs the injured employee to the preferred medical providers, to the extent possible.
- acts as a liaison between employees and supervisors when placing employees into modified duty positions.

Supervisor

The injured worker's supervisor also plays a key role in an effective RTW program. Supervisors are closest to employees every day and likely closest to accidents when they occur. Supervisors manage your most valuable assets, your people. The supervisor must understand the financial and workplace benefits of the RTW program, the sequential steps and the value of open communication. The supervisor:

- ensures that all employees understand the RTW program.
- provides a caring response when an employee is injured.
- escorts the employee to the designated medical provider, as appropriate.
- completes injury documentation forms completely and accurately.
- ensures that the accident is investigated and takes corrective action to prevent reoccurrence.
- communicates immediately with the RTW coordinator regarding injuries.
- calls employees each week to see how they are doing.
- identifies transitional duty opportunities to speed recovery and return the employee to work.
- ensures that co-workers understand the transitional duty program and support it.
- makes sure the recovering employee follows medical restrictions.
- works closely with the RTW coordinator to place injured employees into modified duties and monitors progress as employees transition back to full duty.

Employee

All employees should be educated about their responsibilities in the event they are injured on the job. The employee should:

- follow RTW program guidelines and practices.
- know that their employer will require them to participate in the transitional duty program.
- keep all scheduled doctor appointments.
- cooperate with supervisors to transition to full duties as restrictions are reduced.



Medical Provider

In addition to providing quality care, in order for a RTW program to be most effective the medical provider should have a thorough understanding of what transitional work opportunities are available. The medical provider should:

- review the employee's position description and complete a transitional duty form focusing on what the employee "can do" vs. "can't do" (employer to determine reasonable accommodations).
- discuss RTW opportunities with the employee, employer, and claims adjuster.
- work with the nurse case manager, if needed, to facilitate proper treatment and RTW opportunities for the injured employee.

Claims Adjuster

Through their partnership with the RTW coordinator, the claims adjuster will assist with the employee's return to work. The claims adjuster:

- may assist employer with selecting preferred medical providers.
- conducts ongoing, regular communication with the injured employee and RTW coordinator.
- utilizes nurse case management and vocational rehabilitation assistance when needed.
- works closely with the RTW coordinator and the medical provider to facilitate a prompt and appropriate return to work, whenever possible.

When organizations develop and implement thorough, effective transitional duty RTW programs, the employer and employee benefit. RTW programs benefit employers by providing a structure for managing injuries, keeping productivity up, reducing fraudulent claims, increasing morale, reducing the chance of permanent disability, and lowering workers' compensation costs (both direct and indirect).

RTW programs benefit injured employees by helping to maintain their self-esteem, speeding their recovery, reducing the financial impact of an injury by restoring their income, and returning them to their normal daily life and activities.

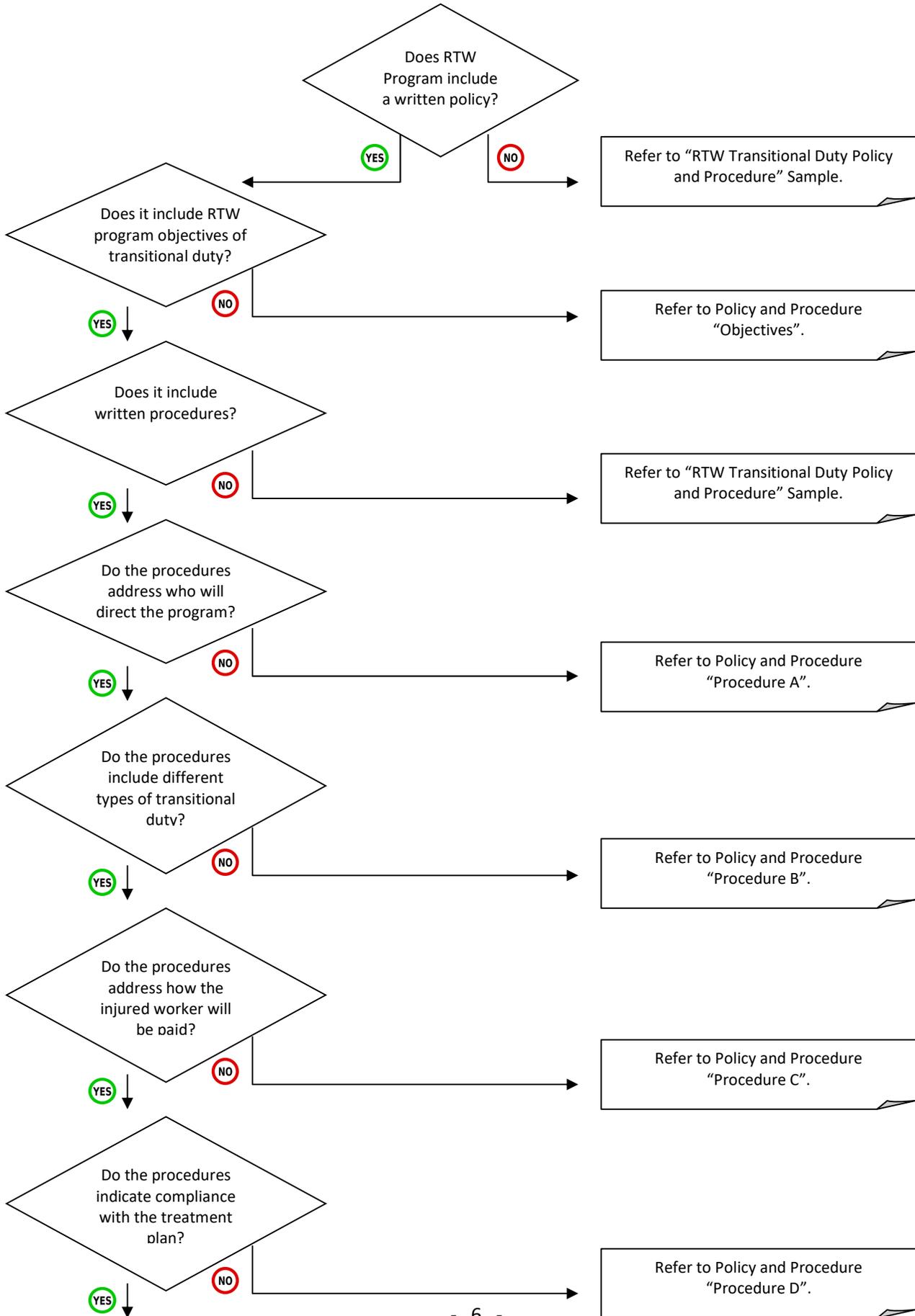


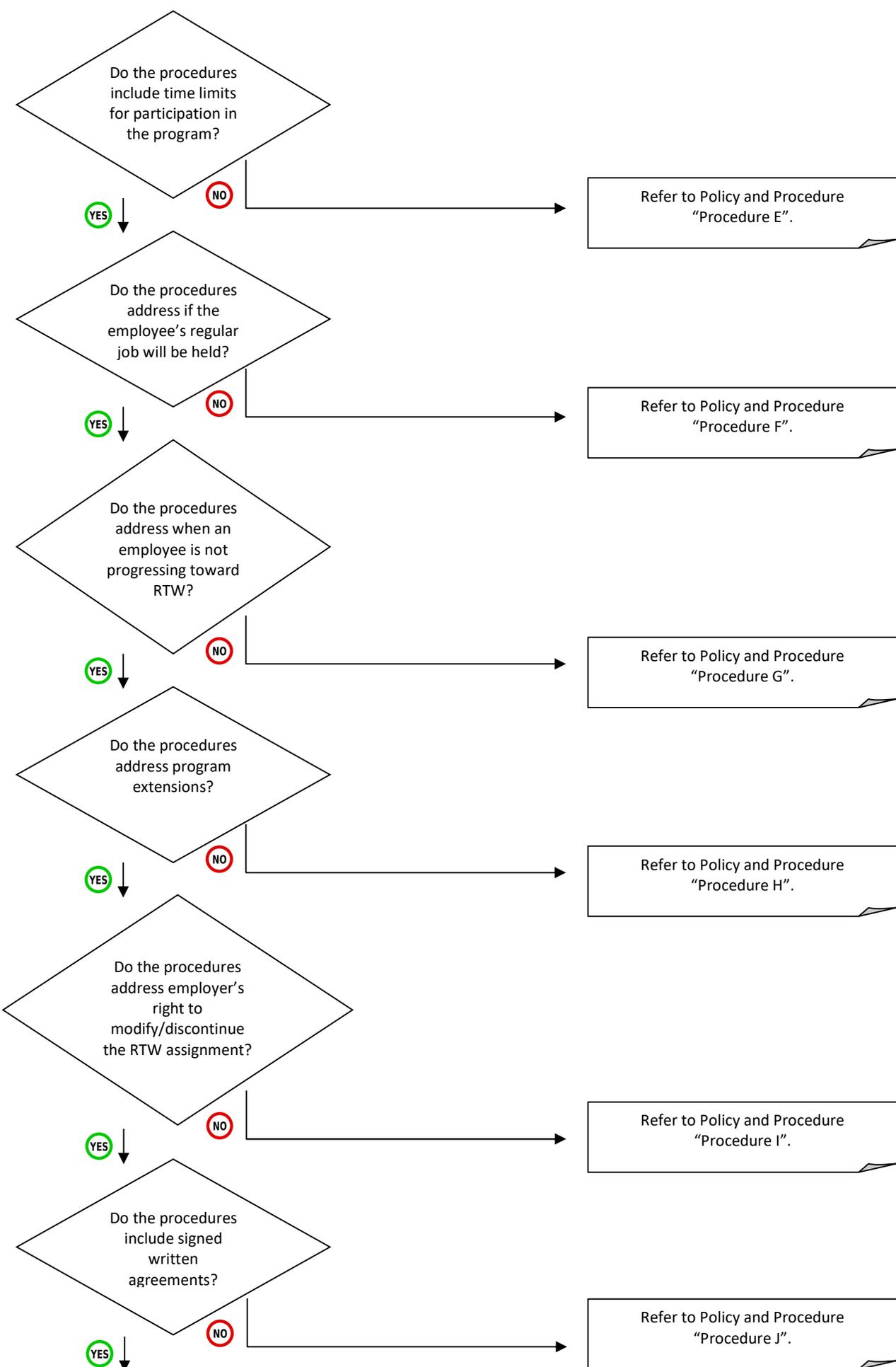
Overcoming Barriers

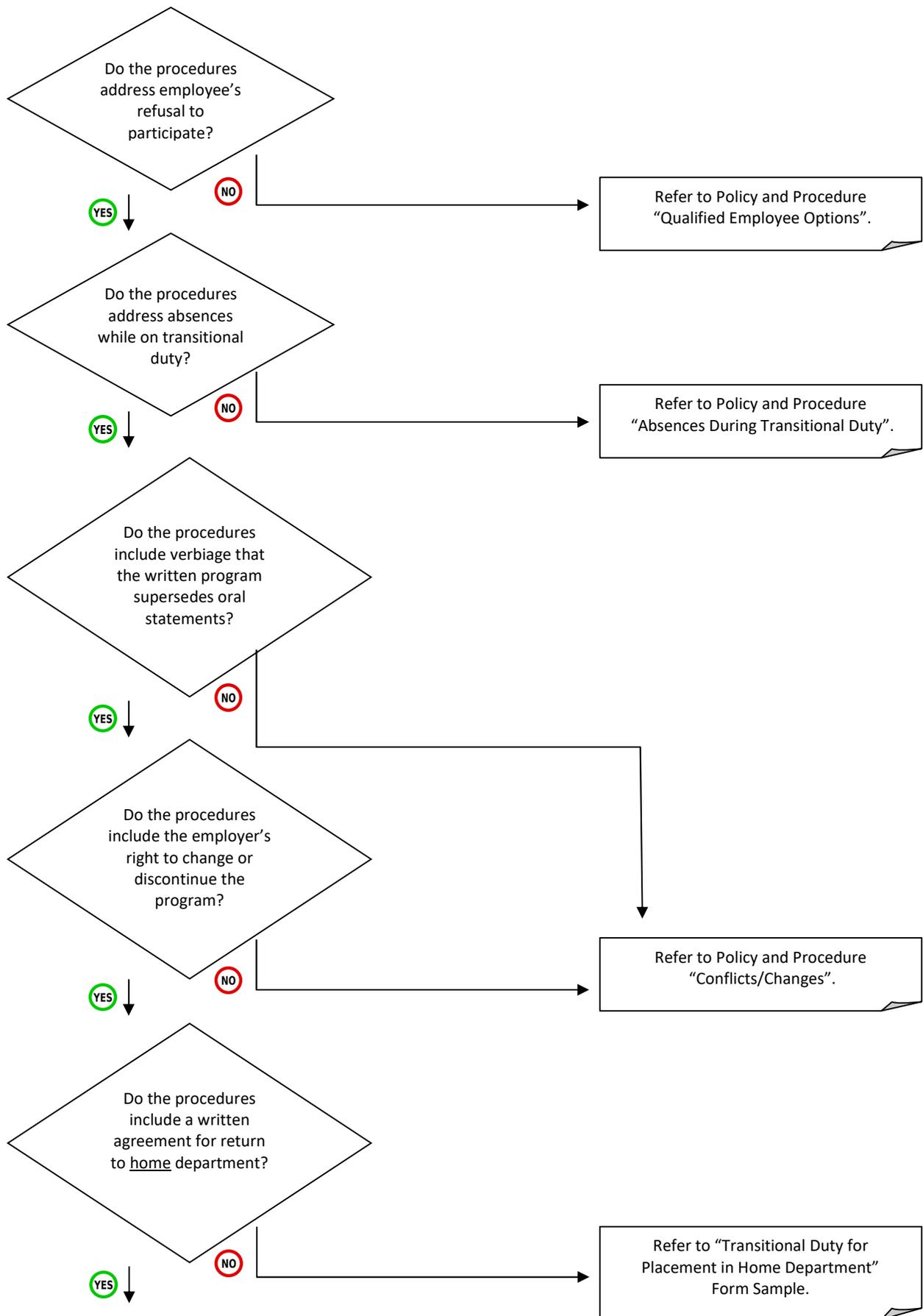
Once an injury at work occurs, one of the most impactful things an employer can do is to get the injured worker back to work as quickly as possible. When employees are unable to return to their full duties, they are released to restricted or modified duties. When this happens, you may encounter barriers. Below are some of the most common barriers along with suggestions on how you might overcome them.

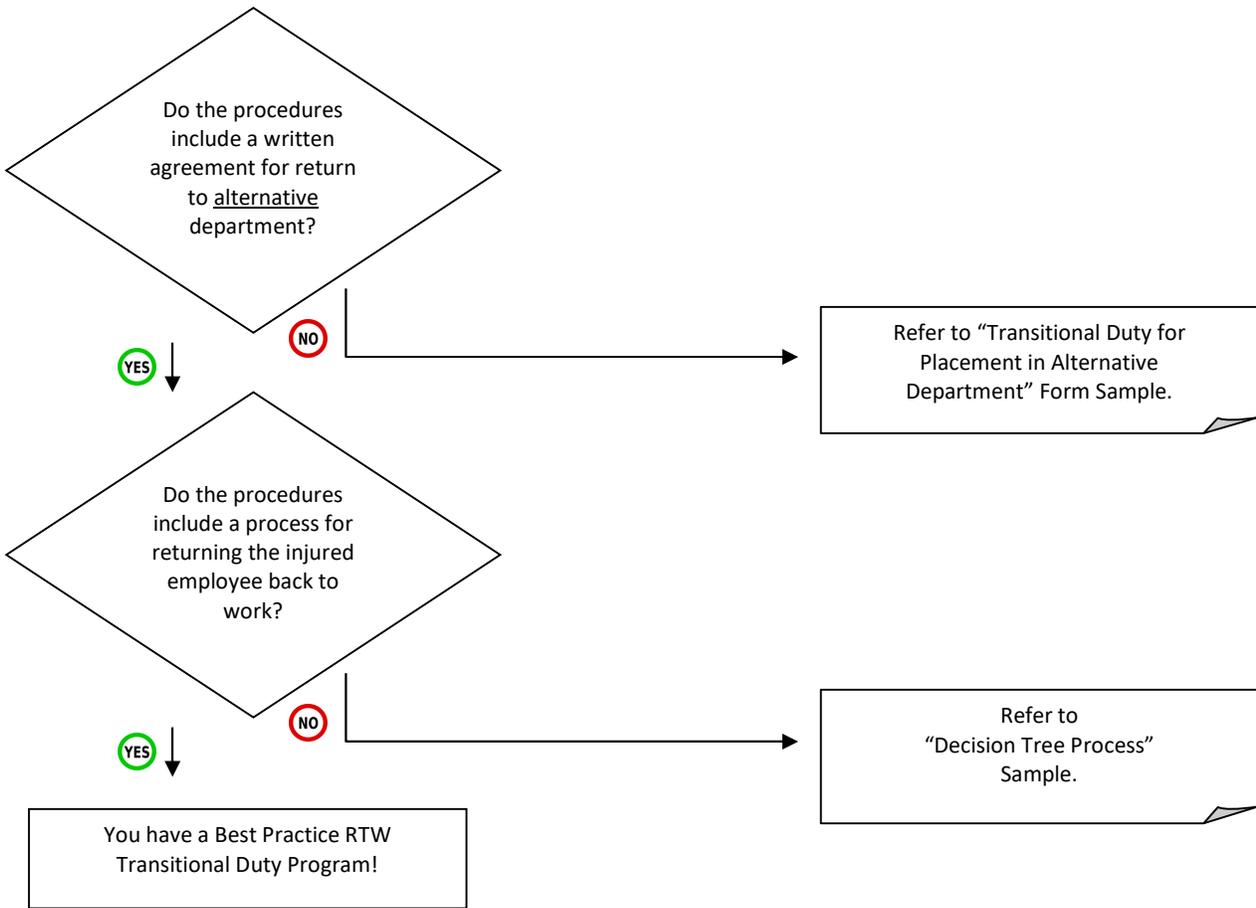
Barrier	Strategies to Overcome Barrier
Treating physician will not release employee with restrictions.	<p>Provide physician with job description and details about physical demands of job so he or she can identify tasks that can be done.</p> <p>Invite physician to visit your facility to become familiar with the organization, jobs, and tasks and availability of modified duty.</p>
No modified jobs are available.	<p>Modify employees' job to meet restrictions by determining which tasks can and cannot be performed.</p> <p>Find other areas or departments where help may be needed which are within restrictions (e.g., filing, greeting, answering phones).</p>
Employee refuses to return to work with restrictions.	<p>Explain that the RTW program is mandatory and failure to participate may jeopardize workers' compensation benefits.</p> <p>Educate employee on the benefits of the RTW program.</p>
Fear employee will get re-injured.	<p>Provide information to the employee that demonstrates workers returning to work in a restricted capacity rarely have a re-injury.</p>
Supervisor is resistant.	<p>Explain that the RTW program is mandatory. Educate supervisor on the benefits of the RTW program. Incorporate RTW responsibilities into supervisor's job description. Incorporate RTW results into supervisor's performance review.</p>
Collective bargaining/unions won't allow it.	<p>Consider including the union when developing or implementing the RTW program to get their buy-in and instill ownership.</p> <p>Educate union on how the employee will benefit from returning to work, such as making the employee financially whole.</p>
Need to maintain productivity.	<p>Remind managers and supervisors that partial productivity is better than no productivity if the employee remains off work.</p> <p>Educate managers and supervisors on how productivity suffers when other workers have to do more work or when unfamiliar employees do the work.</p>
Co-workers will be angry that injured worker is not "carrying their weight".	<p>Keep co-workers involved in the process of bringing the employee back to modified duty. Allow them to be part of the solution (pre-return discussion).</p> <p>Show how the injured worker can add to productivity rather than take away from it.</p>

RTW Transitional Duty Program









Transitional Duty Policies and Procedures

This policy provides alternate work for employees whose work-related injuries or illnesses temporarily prevent them from performing their regular assigned job duties.

Objectives

The Organization will make available a transitional duty assignment for qualified employees who are temporarily unable to perform their regular job duties. The transitional duty assignment is designed to:

- facilitate prompt return to work.
- act as progressive, on-the-job rehabilitation.
- provide salary continuation.
- reduce workers' compensation costs.
- minimize lost productivity.
- minimize costs associated with replacement workers and training.
- reduce unnecessary litigation.

Procedures

- A. The workers' compensation coordinator (WCC) will determine the availability of transitional duties. If the company finds transitional duty work available and appropriate, the WCC will communicate the availability of the duties, nature of work, the designated department, and assigned hours to the qualified employee.
- B. Transitional duties, based on the restrictions established by the authorized treating physician and based on availability as determined by the company, may consist of any of the following:
 - Usual work with modification, in the employee's regular department
 - Different work in the employee's regular department
 - Different work in a different department
 - Temporarily created tasks/position
- C. A qualified employee participating in transitional duties will be paid at his or her regular normal rate or salary, which is applicable to his or her regular job classification as of the date of his or her work-related injury or illness. Any shift differential will be paid in accordance with the actual shift worked.
- D. A qualified employee, as a condition of participating in the transitional duty program, will be responsible for complying with the authorized treating physician's prescribed treatment plan and for contacting the WCC on a weekly basis, as well as honoring all authorized treating physician appointments.
- E. The goal of the transitional duty program is to facilitate the return of injured workers to their regular job duties as quickly and safely as possible. Transitional duty ceases when the qualified employee is released to full duties by his or her authorized treating physician. However, the term of transitional duty is not to exceed twelve (12) weeks.
- F. While the qualified employee is participating in the transitional duty program, the company will guarantee the reinstatement of the employee to his or her regular job for a maximum of twelve (12) weeks, provided the employee can perform the essential functions of his or her regular job with or without reasonable accommodation.

- G. Employees not making progress toward the goal of returning to his or her regular job, as deemed by the company, will be evaluated for continued participation in the transitional duty program.
- H. The company recognizes that, on occasion, a situation may arise whereby a qualified employee participating in the transitional duty program and progressing satisfactorily toward the goal of returning to their regular job will reach the maximum allowable timeframe (12 weeks). In these situations, and on a case-by-case basis, extensions to continuing participation in the transitional duty program may be granted at the discretion of the WCC or Human Resources. However, extensions of transitional duty beyond the initial 12-week period do not extend the guaranteed reinstatement to the employee's regular job.
- I. The company reserves the right, at any time, to modify or discontinue the transitional duty assignment.
- J. Qualified employees participating in the transitional duty program must sign and comply with the appropriate Transitional Duty Agreement.

Qualified Employee Options

At the time an employee becomes a qualified employee, the company may offer the employee an opportunity to participate in the transitional duty program. If the qualified employee chooses not to participate in the transitional duty program offered by the company, the company may not be obligated to pay state workers' compensation benefits for lost wages. This will be effective as of the date the employee elects not to participate.

Absences During Transitional Duty

Qualified employees participating in the transitional duty program are expected to report any absences to their transitional duty supervisor and to the WCC.

- A. Employees with an absence related to the occupational injury/illness must be evaluated by the authorized treating physician on the day of the absence or as soon as feasible before being allowed to return to transitional duty.
- B. Employees requesting time off unrelated to the occupational injury/illness may do so in accordance with Human Resources policies. However, workers' compensation lost time benefits will not be paid during this period.
- C. Employees continue to remain subject to all attendance policies during a transitional duty assignment.

Conflicts/Changes

If any statements contained in these procedures are in conflict with or contradict any oral conversations that have been made by any representative of the company, the terms contained in these written procedures shall override any oral statements made.

The company reserves the right to change or discontinue the transitional duty program at any time for any reason.

Transitional Duty for Placement in Home Department

Due to your restrictions as a result of a work-related injury or illness, you will enter our Transitional Duty Program. This program provides positions for employees temporarily restricted from performing their regular duties. We are pleased to let you know that your home department will be able to accommodate your restrictions.

1. Your initial transitional duty assignment will be as follows:

Date: _____ Department: _____ Supervisor: _____

Schedule: _____

Restrictions: _____

2. While on transitional duty, you will earn the same base wages you were earning before your injury.
3. You must notify your transitional duty supervisor of all scheduled absences, as well as any other time off of work. You are subject to all (Organization Name) policies and procedures while on transitional duty.
4. You must provide the authorized treating physician's statement of work restrictions to your transitional duty supervisor after each appointment.
5. You will be expected to keep all scheduled appointments that relate to your injury/illness, as well as adhere to the work schedule you are assigned.
6. You are required to contact your transitional duty supervisor if you are unable to come to work. At that time, (Organization Name) will assess the need for you to be seen by your treating physician.
7. You will remain in the transitional duty program until you have been released to full duty, your authorized treating physician requests your removal from the program, or you have reached the maximum allowed by the program. You may not remove yourself from the program without prior authorization.
8. This assignment will be re-evaluated every thirty (30) days during your period of transitional duty. If you are not released to return to full duty by your authorized treating physician at the end of the allowable transitional duty period, you may be removed from the program.
9. Since transitional duty is a temporary assignment, it may be necessary to change the work assignment as your restrictions or as work situations change. (Organization Name) reserves the right to remove anyone from participation in the transitional duty program.

I will be your primary contact while you are on transitional duty. You should notify me if you have any questions concerning this program.

Supervisor Name: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____

Date: _____ Phone #: _____

I have read and understand the Transitional Duty Agreement and will comply with the guidelines outlined in this agreement.

Employee Name: _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

Transitional Duty for Placement in Alternative Department

Due to your restrictions as a result of a work-related injury or illness, you will enter our Transitional Duty Program. This program provides positions for employees temporarily restricted from performing their regular duties. While your home department is unable to accommodate your restrictions, we are pleased to let you know that we have found an alternative department that will be able to accommodate your restrictions.

1. Your initial transitional duty assignment will be as follows:

Date: _____ Department: _____ Supervisor: _____

Schedule: _____

Restrictions: _____

2. While on transitional duty, you will earn the same base wage you were earning before your injury.
3. You must notify your transitional duty supervisor of all scheduled absences as well as any other time off of work. You are subject to all of our policies and procedures while on transitional duty.
4. You must provide the authorized treating physician's statement of work restrictions to your transitional duty supervisor after each appointment.
5. You will be expected to keep all scheduled appointments that relate to your injury/illness as well as adhere to the work schedule you are assigned.
6. You are required to contact your transitional duty supervisor if you are unable to come to work. At that time, we will assess the need for you to be seen by your treating physician.
7. You will remain in the transitional duty program until you have been released to full duty, your authorized treating physician requests your removal from the program, or you have reached the maximum allowed by the program. You may not remove yourself from the program without prior authorization.
8. This assignment will be re-evaluated every thirty (30) days during your period of transitional duty. If you are not released to return to full duty by your authorized treating physician at the end of the allowable transitional duty period, you may be removed from the program.
9. Since transitional duty is a temporary assignment, it may be necessary to change the work assignment as your restrictions or as work situations change. (Organization Name) reserves the right to remove anyone from participation in the transitional duty program.

I will be your primary contact while you are on transitional duty. You should notify me if you have any questions concerning this program.

Supervisor Name: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____

Date: _____ Phone #: _____

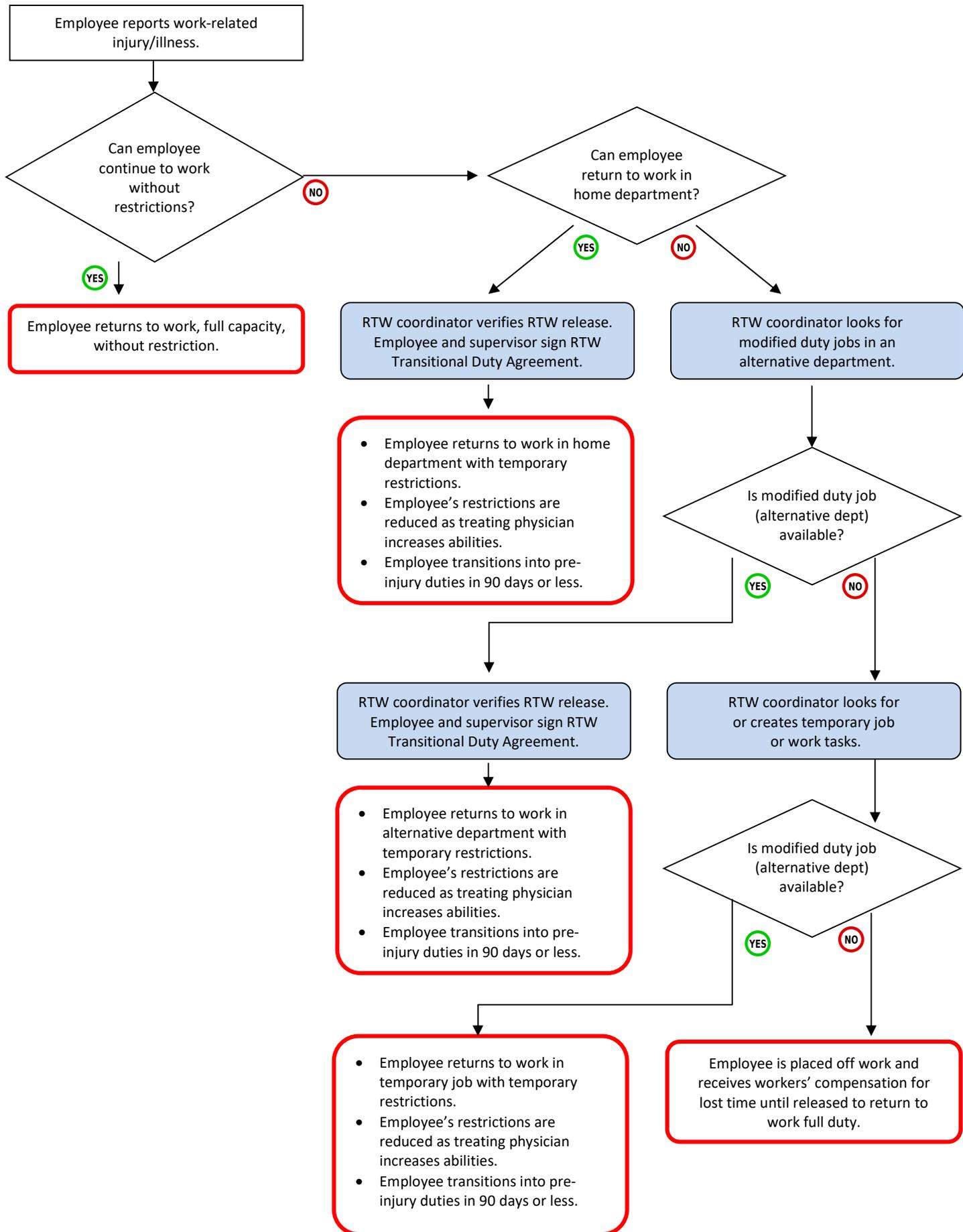
I have read and understand the Transitional Duty Agreement and will comply with the guidelines outlined in this agreement.

Employee Name: _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

RTW Decision Tree Process (Sample)



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How does a RTW program benefit my employees?

A: By returning to work sooner, your employee is less apt to face physical de-conditioning and loss of work skills. The employee will also keep earning money, which enhances self-worth and job satisfaction. And the sooner employees begin transitional work, the more likely they will be able to return to their original job.

Q: How do I know if workers have a positive attitude to return to work?

A: Determining a worker's attitude to return to work during recovery is important. While employers should take care not to harass the injured worker, it is often useful to ask the worker a number of questions. Useful questions include the following:

- How do you feel about returning to work following injury?
- Do you have any concerns? Do you see any barriers?
- How could we better support your return to work when you are ready?
- In which areas do you think you may need some assistance?

Q: What is a job modification?

A: A job modification is an adjustment or alteration to the way a job is performed. The modification may be temporary during recovery or permanent.

Q: Why should a job be modified?

A: Modifying a job helps an injured worker return to work more quickly. It typically decreases time-loss and long-term disability.

Q: How long should an employee be in a modified duty job before returning to full duty?

A: Modified duty should be offered for a predetermined period of time, **usually no longer than 90 days. Beyond 90 days**, the period of time should be decided on a case-by-case basis based upon the employee's restrictions, job demands, and the treating physician's orders.

Q: How much contact is appropriate while the worker is off work?

A: Employers need to strike an effective balance between keeping contact with the worker during recovery and harassment. As a guideline, it may be appropriate to contact the worker once a week by phone and hold a face-to-face meeting once a month. If a worker goes to the hospital or to rehabilitation, it is typically appropriate for employers to visit workers on-site. Each time you contact the worker:

- ask them how they are progressing with their injury.
- inform them about developments in the work environment.
- emphasize you are excited for them to return to work.
- ask them about how you can support them in any way.

Q: How do I know if the RTW program is cost effective?

A: Research has shown that injured employees who do not return to work within six months have only a 50% chance of returning to their pre-injury job. Returning an employee to work through an RTW program can reduce the overall cost of a claim. Individual results may vary, so benchmarking systems should be instituted to measure the effectiveness of a program.

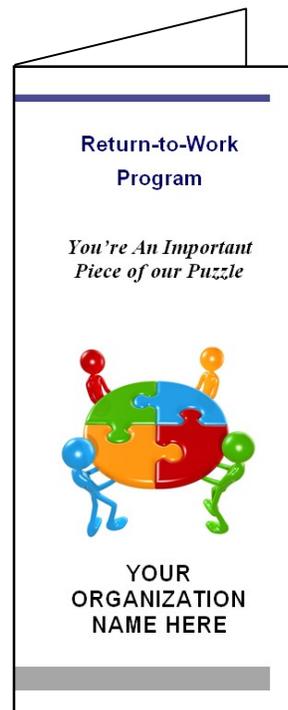


Employee Brochure

When an employee is injured and is unable to work, there are often questions and a sense of uncertainty. Consider creating a brochure for the employee to have as a reference for navigating his or her way through a very difficult time. Include an explanation of the following:

- The program and your philosophy on returning to work
- Workers' compensation benefits
- Modified/transitional duty
- Employee responsibilities
- Employer responsibilities
- Fraud
- Who to contact with questions

See the sample brochure at the end of this document.



Transitional Duty Activities

Fostering an early return to work is not only important from a cost-control perspective but also helps the worker feel valued by the employer. Remember, suitable duties must be consistent with the restrictions by the treating physician.

Area	Questions you may ask	Example ideas for return to work duties
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What tasks have I been meaning to do for some time but never got around to? • What needs are coming up in the next three to 12 months? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processing tax receipts • Data entry and checking accuracy • Filing and re-organizing business paperwork
Business Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could I develop any new systems to further improve the business? • Could I ask the worker to do anything that may help further improve the business or business processes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a new filing system • Developing forms for improved efficiency • Writing content of a training manual • Working on a quality assurance system
Sales/Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does my business have any extra needs for promotion? • What work could be directed towards promoting my business and increasing sales? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making phone sales or calling clients • Developing content for promotions • Performing market research on competitors; doing a small-scale client satisfaction survey • Analyzing business sales information • Updating client contact databases
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could the worker help organize a certain part of my business? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing parts and materials • Finding new suppliers for parts/materials including cheaper or better materials • Researching new suppliers
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could the worker do any training which they can bring back to the workplace? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer courses • Courses on manual handling • Course on certain technical skills

Letter to Physician

On Employer Letterhead

Date

ADDRESS BLOCK

RE: Transition Duty for [NAME OF EMPLOYEE]

Claim Number:

Dear Dr. [NAME],

This letter is to notify you of [COMPANY NAME] Return-To-Work program. As an employer we have a commitment to accommodating restrictions resulting from a work-related injury.

To assist [NAME OF EMPLOYEE] in returning to work, we would like to offer [him/her] transitional duty. I have enclosed a description of [his/her] position duties and tasks. Please provide your medical opinion about [NAME OF EMPLOYEE] ability to perform this job. If in your opinion there are physical restrictions that would prevent [NAME OF EMPLOYEE] from performing this job, we will attempt to modify the existing position or place [him/her] in a modified duty job until [he/she] can resume the original position. We will also take steps to ensure that all restrictions are met.

Our goal is to help this employee work in a productive capacity while they recover. We look forward to working with you to achieve this goal.

If further modification or accommodations are needed, please describe them in detail. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Job Title]

[Contact Information]

Enclosed: Job Description

Glossary of Terms

Accommodation

Modified or alternative work that allows an injured employee to work within his or her physical restrictions while injured.

Agreed Medical Examiner (AME)

A physician used by both parties to resolve a medical dispute in litigable cases.

Delay in Decision

A notice to the employee advising that a decision to accept or reject liability for the claim is not yet possible, giving the reason(s). This will allow adequate time to investigate claims without risking a penalty for failure to provide benefits within a reasonable time.

Disability

Any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.

Economic Loss

Future loss of earnings of a worker who has suffered an injury resulting in permanent impairment or temporary disability for 12 continuous months. This is the first part of the dual-award system.

Ergonomics

The science of adapting work environments to suit the capabilities and characteristics of individuals. Size, shape, age, gender, and physical abilities, in addition to strength, endurance, and work tolerance can affect the ability of some workers to do their jobs. Ergonomics considers job design, tools and equipment, the management of physical environments, and worker capabilities and limitations.

Essential Duties

Core functions of a job, without which the job outcome could not be achieved.

Independent Medical Examination (IME) An examination to obtain the opinion of an independent physician to determine issues such as diagnosis, recommended treatment plan, causal relationship, and ability to return to work. These exams are usually arranged by the claims handler and attendance is mandatory.

Lost Time Claims

Claims where there is a loss of earnings beyond the day of injury which is generally supported by medical documentation.

Maximum Medical Improvement (MMI)

The point where an injured employee's condition is not likely to improve significantly with further medical treatment. Permanent restriction may need to be identified at this point.

Medical-Legal Exam

An examination to obtain medical evidence to establish the existence of the severity of a compensable condition. The main issue if an exam of this type is done is that there must be a contested issue. If there is no contested issue, then a medical-legal exam is not performed.

Medical Rehabilitation

Early involvement in treating injured or ill workers ideally within, or close to, their own communities. Includes a shorter rest period after injury and early, active physical therapy. If the recovery is prolonged, rehabilitation may also include further health care assessments and an evaluation of physical abilities.

Occupational Therapy

The art and science of directing a person's participation in selected tasks to restore, reinforce and enhance performance, facilitate learning of those skills and functions essential for adaptation and productivity, diminish or correct pathology, and promote and maintain health.

Permanent and Stationary (P&S)

The condition that exists when an injured employee's medical condition stabilizes, as determined by a treating physician.

Permanent Disability (PD)

When the disability is found to be permanent and stationary and the injured worker is precluded from competing in the open labor market, the employee may be entitled to a permanent disability rating. A physician determines the extent of the work preclusion. Based on state guidelines, a disability rating and dollar value to be awarded the injured worker is determined from the physician's report.

Permanent Disability (PD) Rating

A formula that takes into consideration the amount of disability (determined by a physician), part(s) of the body affected, age, and occupation. Final PD rating is expressed as a percentage (e.g., 55.5%).

Restrictions

The health care provider may restrict an injured employee's work during recovery. Restriction may limit work activities (i.e., no lifting) or temporarily reduce the number of hours the employee can work per day.

Temporary Disability (TD)

Lost wages provided to an employee who is temporarily unable to work because of a work-related injury are based on state guidelines.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Programs and services designed to re-establish, as much as possible, a worker's pre-injury earnings profile or maximum earnings potential.

Work Assessment

Also called work evaluation or work trial. A program to assess an individual's functional capabilities in a real work situation. It is a method of returning an injured or ill worker to the work force by building up physical tolerances on a gradual basis.

Important Facts

- The RTW program is available to all employees with work-related injuries and illnesses.
- Participation in the RTW program is mandatory. Failure to participate may jeopardize workers' compensation benefits.
- Employees must provide their department's human resources or RTW coordinator the medical status form releasing them to return to work and noting the restrictions, if any.
- The RTW team, treating physician, employee, and the department partner together to create an effective RTW program.

Fraud

Fraud is when a person deliberately misrepresents or fails to disclose information to receive benefits to which he or she is not entitled. Fraud is a crime, and we pursue offenders.

Additional Information

For additional information about the RTW program, contact your Human Resources Department.

NAME/OFFICE

WEBSITE

PHONE NUMBER

Return-to-Work Program

*You're An Important
Piece of our Puzzle*



**YOUR
ORGANIZATION
NAME HERE**

RTW Program Purpose

The primary goal of this RTW program is to return you to work at the earliest medically allowable date and in accordance with the medical treatment plan. Our RTW program promotes rehabilitation and enhances the recovery process.



Why Return to Work?

You are a valued member of our organization, and we rely on each other to get the job done. Our experience shows the advantages of coming back to work include:

- quick recovery times
- a smoother transition back to work
- maintaining self-esteem in spite of the medical condition
- receiving a regular paycheck with regular benefits
- maintaining relationships at work

RTW Program Goals

- Fulfill our moral, ethical, and legal responsibilities to you.
- Provide transitional assignments for temporarily modified work to get you back to your job.
- Create positive workplace morale through collaborative communication and support.

How Do I Get Back to Work?

- Give your doctor the medical status form on the first and all subsequent visits. You may obtain this form from your supervisor, Human Resources, or online at: [website].
- Let your doctor know that your department has a return-to-work (RTW) Program.
- A transitional duty team consisting of you, your supervisor, Human Resources, and/or a team coordinator will routinely meet to review the medical status form and identify temporary transitional duties available.
- You will work in the temporary transitional duty position as needs dictate or until you are released back to work by your physician.

Employee Benefits

- Earn regular, hourly wages and accrue all benefits as applicable in the regular “time of injury” job.
- Speed recovery while minimizing disruption to normal routine.
- Preserve leave time and benefit balances.
- Work in a controlled environment to minimize risk of re-injury.
- Have productive use of abilities to maintain and promote self-esteem.

Department Benefits

- Maintaining productivity in the workplace
- Supporting the culture of caring for our employees
- Providing a safe and timely transition back to work
- Keeping trained and experienced workers on the job
- Minimizing workers’ compensation costs
- Saving money spent on hiring temporary workers.
- Maximizing communication with injured employees
- Reducing likelihood of adversarial relationships