

	<b>Montana Mental Health Nursing Care Center Policy Manual</b>	<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>436</b>
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	<b>Department: Personnel</b>	<b>Revised Date</b>	<b>01/09/2014</b>
	<b>Early Return to Work</b>		

**POLICY:**

It is the intent of MMHNCC to work with injured employee, their health care provider, and Montana State Fund to maintain an Early Return To Work (ERTW) program to allow injured employees to return to work in a transitional capacity where activities are temporarily limited to medical necessity.

**Purpose:**

1. To identify responsibilities in the event of a work related injury that results in Workers Compensation benefits.
2. To establish a process for employees injured at work to return to work in a limited capacity.

**Definitions:**

1. Early Return To Work – A program that involves the employer, the injured employee, the employee’s health-care provider and Montana State Fund working together to identify transitional assignments that allow an injured employee to return to work in a capacity that does not interfere with physical limitations (as identified by their health-care provider).
2. Transitional Assignment – A temporary work assignment that includes duties that do not interfere with an injured employee’s physical limitations (as identified by their health-care provider).
3. Time of Injury Job Analysis (TJA) – An assessment of an employee’s regular duties to provide a physician with an accurate description of the physical demands of the employee’s regular job so the physician can provide medical approval or disapproval for an employee to perform that job.
4. Modified Job Analysis (MJA) – An assessment of modified duties to provide a physician with an accurate description of the physical demands of a modified position so the physician can provide medical approval or disapproval for an employee to perform that job.

**Responsibilities:**

1. Employees – Report injuries to their immediate supervisor at the time of the injury. Make regular contact with their supervisor when they are away from work as the result of a work related injury. Provide a medical statement to their supervisor after each work related physician visit. The Physician Report of Injury Form should be completed by the employee's physician at each doctor appointment. The injured employee should take the Medical Information Release form to their physician during their initial appointment. Employees must make contact with their supervisor every week when missing work due to an injury.
2. Supervisors – Work with injured employees and Montana State Fund to ensure prompt claims reporting and managing from time of injury to time of closure of the claim. Report all injuries to the Personnel Office. Work with Montana State Fund to identify transitional duties for an employee returning ERTW status. Ensure the injured employee is:
  - A. Making regular contact at least every week with the Supervisor
  - B. Providing medical documentation after each physician visit

**PROCEDURE:****Worker's Compensation**

1. All supervisors and injured employees should be given a copy of this policy.
2. Injured employees must complete an Incident Report within 3 days anytime they are injured. The employee must give the completed Incident Report to their immediate supervisor. If possible the Incident Report should be completed immediately after the injury.
3. Employees must notify their immediate supervisor if they miss work as the result of an injury that occurs at work.
4. Employees must notify their immediate supervisor if they seek medical attention as the result of an injury that occurs at work. Employees must obtain a medical statement from their physician anytime they see a physician as the result of an injury that occurs at work.
5. The supervisor must complete a "First Report" or call the Work Comp first Report phone number for all employees who have a work accident/incident. The "First Report" must be submitted to Montana State Fund in a timely manner.

## Early Return to Work (ERTW)

**Early Return to Work:**

1. The employee will have their physician complete the “Return to Work Recommendation” form (attachment #1) and submit it to their supervisor.
2. The injured employee’s supervisor will coordinate with their supervisor to identify transitional assignments that may be available in the work area
3. The supervisor will notify the Personnel Assistant when an employee is placed on transitional duty. The Personnel Assistant will send an “Early Return to Work Letter from the Employer to the Injured Employee” (Attachment #2). A copy will be sent to the physician.
4. If the employee is released to work a transitional assignment, the supervisor must focus on modifying the employee’s existing job when possible. At all times the supervisor must ensure the employee does not engage in any activity that is beyond the employee’s physical limitations.
5. At the end of three weeks the transitional assignments will be reviewed to determine how the employee is progressing and to decide if adjustments need to be made in the transitional assignment.
6. Transitional assignments may be extended for a total of 90 days if the injured employee continues to show improvement each week and submits verification from their health-care provider no less than every 30 days indicating continuing improvement. A typical transitional assignment will not ordinarily last longer than 35 days, but can be extended if the injured employee shows improvement.
7. Employees working in a transitional assignment must be aware of and must not exceed physical limitations identified by their personal physician.
8. Employees working in a transitional assignment must complete a Leave of Absence Request Form for any time missed due to their injury. In addition, employees must abide by all policies and procedures relating to missed work.
9. Transitional assignments may be on an alternate shift or work area.
10. Employees working in a transitional assignment are not eligible for overtime assignments.
11. MMHNCC has identified regular transitional duty jobs for each department.

**References:** DPHHS Worker’s Compensation Policy (Human Resources Policy #340).