

BULLETIN

Risk Control

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by Lee Patton

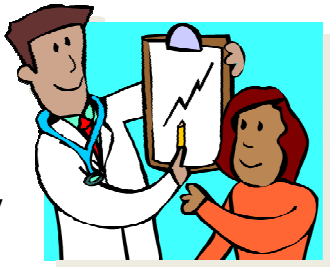
July 2009

NEW! Expanded Return to Work Program Introduced at San Diego Training Conference

We have been stressing the importance of providing Transitional Duty when an employee has been injured on the job. Why not expand the program to include non-occupational medical conditions. With the expansion of this Program, we have decided to call it a Return to Work Program rather than a Transitional Duty Program. The benefits of a Return to Work Program (RTW) are the same in both situations. You allow employees to return to work when they have temporary work restrictions. It is done under the guidance of the company doctor or the employee's personal physician. It provides work-hardening at work, and we expect duties to be increased as the restrictions are removed.

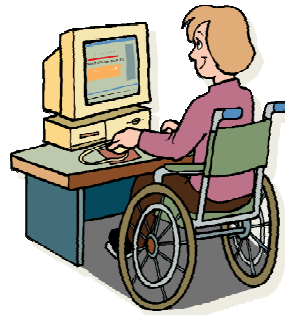
The elements of a (RTW) Program are essentially the same; however, you will need to expand the (RTW) Policy to include non-occupational medical conditions. Then there are some additional steps needed regarding communication with the employee's doctor.

- ✓ First, your employee will need to provide their doctor with a Medical Certification form that follows the Family Medical Leave Act (FLMA) and California Family Rights Act (CFRA).



- ✓ With this, your employee will also need to sign an Authorization for Release of Medical Information form.

- ✓ Once the Medical Certification form is received back from the doctor, you will send the doctor a letter describing your company's (RTW) Program, and encourage the employee and their participation.



The remaining elements of the RTW remain unchanged. You will still have a RTW team which consists of a key group of decision makers within your company such as a representative of top

management, the human resources manager, risk or safety manager, department manager, supervisor and union representative if applicable. We do suggest that the RTW coordinator be the person who handles human resource duties at your company. They will act as the liaison between the employee, supervisor, and doctor and in the case of workers' compensation between the JPIA claims representative. The human resource person will be more familiar with confidentiality requirements and FLMA/CFRA requirements. We also recognize that for our smaller districts, this team will be much smaller.

It is important to remember that any employee out on leave for their own serious illness or injury (for a duration of more than three days), should be placed on Family Leave, according to Federal and California law. For more information, refer to the many links on the internet, or information provided by attorneys

and other services. The JPIA's website contains information on this topic. Go to www.acwajpia.com, Resources, then Human Resources, and scroll down to Family Leave.

We have placed an updated Model Return to Work Program on our website, along with all the forms you will need to revise your current program, or to initiate a program if you haven't taken that step yet.

As we state in our RTW Policy, we recognize that our employees are a critical part of our operations. Even if an employee becomes injured on or off the job, or has a temporary disability as a result of surgery or an illness, they remain a valuable part of our staff.

Return to Work Programs are an effective tool in returning employees to productive work in the shortest time possible, while maintaining high morale and keeping costs to a minimum. All of this is done as soon as the doctor determines that the employee is medically ready to come back to work, and may mean making temporary modifications to the job duties or work hours to accommodate the employee's recovery.

Remember, you will most likely need to think outside the box when coming up with temporary duty positions. This will especially be the case with our smaller districts. However, we know you can make it work.

JPIA Annual Training Conference

**Tuesday, September 22 &
Wednesday, September 23, 2009
8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

Join us for two days of professional development where you can participate in courses designed especially for Water Industry employees like yourself.

We will showcase an exciting new course that you will not want to miss, and will also offer many of those needed to complete your Professional Development Program. Take advantage of this opportunity to learn skills and

information to help you do your job better and contribute to the safety and success of your agency.

The best news is that the registration fee for the Conference is still at the low price of \$75 per day, if you register by August 1st.

The Conference will be held in sunny Visalia at the beautiful Visalia Holiday Inn. The hotel is conveniently located off Hwy. 99 at Hwy. 198. Come experience the majestic foothills where the sequoias meet the valley.



Mark your calendar and plan to attend. *Registration is available now, check our website – www.acwajpia.com*

Risk Control Manual - Updates

The Risk Control Manual has recently been updated. Please be sure to check our website and download the latest revisions of 7-14-09. Included here is the newly revised

Return to Work Program under Section 7. Should you need assistance regarding the Risk

Control Manual, please contact Terry Lofing, Risk Management Department at (800) 231-5742, Ext. 3126, or tlofing@acwajpia.com for assistance.



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