



<b>Policy 7.11</b>	<b>Return to Work (from Illness/Injury) Program</b>		
<u>Effective Date:</u> 2/28/12	<u>Applicable Law/Statute:</u> None	<u>Source Doc/Dept.:</u> None/HR	<u>Authorizing I.C. Sec.:</u> None
<u>Last Amended Date:</u>			

## **Return to Work (from Illness/Injury) Program**

**7.11**

### **POLICY**

The County of DuPage Return to Work (RTW) Program provides temporary modified duty to employees who have suffered a work related injury or illness as defined by the Illinois Workers' Compensation and/or Occupational Disease Acts, and as a result are not immediately able to return to full duty. The goal of the RTW Program is for the County to work with injured/ill employees and the employee's physician to transition the employee back to full, unrestricted duty.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

- All employees under County Board Jurisdiction regardless of employment

### **GUIDELINES**

**A. Workplace Injuries/Illnesses.** Employees who suffer a job-related injury or illness within the scope of employment and who are determined by their physician to be able to return to work but with restrictions on their next scheduled work day shall qualify for RTW. An employee injured within the scope of employment who is not returned to full duty by their physician on their next scheduled work day must:

1. Report the injury to their immediate supervisor and complete all required documentation pursuant to Policy 7.10 – Workplace Injury Reporting;
2. Immediately after receiving medical care, contact their immediate supervisor and provide the supervisor with all documentation from the treating physician, which must include a diagnosis of the injury and a list of physical restrictions;
3. Meet with their department director or designee in conjunction with Human Resources and Risk Management to discuss the terms and conditions of a temporary modified duty position within the restrictions outlined by their physician; and
4. Report to work under the terms and conditions of the modified duty position offered.

## PROCEDURE

1. Prior to the employee's start date in the RTW program, the employee will be scheduled to meet with the Human Resources Department and the department director (or designee) to review and sign an RTW Modified Duty Agreement. The agreement will include at a minimum the following:
  - a. A specific start and stop date for the RTW modified duty assignment. Said dates will be, in part, based on information provided by the physician relative to the nature of an employee's condition and the anticipated recuperation time. The time an employee may remain in a RTW modified duty position shall be determined at the discretion of the department director in conjunction with the Human Resources Department on a case by case basis, but in most cases will not exceed 12 weeks;
  - b. Reporting requirements relative to the progress of prescribed treatment and the frequency of those reports;
  - c. Specific treatment ordered by the physician; and
  - d. A specific listing of limits established by the physician which may include, but is not limited to:
    1. Limits in the number of hours per day the employee can work;
    2. Climbing limitations (ladders, steps, etc.);
    3. Limitations in the use of equipment;
    4. Walking and/or standing limitations;
    5. Stooping and/or twisting limitations;
    6. Lifting limitations both for weight and height, as well as frequency; and
    7. Pushing and/or pulling limitations.
    8. Specific steps developed in conjunction with the physician to "condition" the employee so that they can return to their position as quickly as possible. An example of a conditional objective may be to gradually increase the number of hours per day an employee works or gradually increase the number of days per week the employee participates in normal job duties versus transitional work.
2. **Refusal to Participate-Workplace Injury.** Should an employee with a workplace injury refuse approved RTW modified duty, the County may cease payment of wage continuation and/or the County's worker's compensation claims management services provider may terminate temporary total disability compensation to the fullest extent allowed by Illinois law.

- 3. RTW Guidelines.** While on RTW modified duty, employees will:
- a. Not be eligible for overtime or special duty (except court duty for sworn personnel);
  - b. Not be permitted to respond to emergencies, drive marked safety vehicles or, for sworn personnel, wear any part of the uniform of the day (unless authorized);
  - c. Be assigned to perform duties the employee is capable of performing in the department where such work is available, as determined by the department director(s);
  - d. Be paid the compensation the employee would have received had they continued to perform their regular duties.
  - e. Be required to use sick, vacation, or personal business time for medical appointments related to any injury/illness whether work related or not.
- 4. Number of RTW Positions.** The availability and number of RTW positions available in a department shall be determined by the department director. When considering RTW requests, priority shall be given to employees who have suffered workplace injuries.
- 5. Return to Work.** Employees will be returned to full duty only upon a full written release from their physician indicating the employee may return to full duty without restriction. The County may require a fitness for duty exam.