

RETURN TO WORK

Policy Number: HR405

Effective Date: May 6, 2020

Application: The Return to Work (RTW) Policy shall apply to any **Eastern Washington State Historical Society (EWSHS)** employee suffering from a work-related illness or injury, receiving, or eligible to receive, time loss compensation under RCW 51.32.090.

History: This policy updates the previous version dated February 1, 2017. This replaces previous version HR Policy BP#1130. The EWSHS Board of Trustees adopted final changes on May 6, 2020.

Purpose - The purpose of the Return-to-Work (RTW) program is to assist eligible employees to return to work following an industrial injury or illness.

Definitions

Eligibility – Employees are eligible to participate in the RTW program under the following conditions:

1. The employee is a permanent employee.
2. The employee is receiving compensation under RCW 51.32.090.
3. The employee has a temporary disability which makes them temporarily unable to return to his or her previous work, but who is capable of carrying out work of a lighter or modified nature as evidenced by a written statement from a physician or licensed mental health professional.

Policy Statement

Employees who are medically certified as temporarily disabled due to a work-related injury or illness will be given available, time limited opportunities for light or modified job duties.

The Department of Enterprise Services (DES) Human Resources (HR) Consultant will manage all employee industrial insurance claims and function as the agency's RTW Coordinator.

The employee's supervisor will work with the RTW Coordinator to identify suitable job assignments within the limitations identified by the employee's health care provider. A written description of the light or modified job duties, including salary, job description, and starting date will be provided to the employee, health care provider, and the claims manager. The RTW Coordinator will investigate return-to-work opportunities agency-wide. Efforts will be made to identify a position closest in nature to the employee's permanently held position.

Light or modified duties will cease when the employee's health care provider releases the employee for full duty. Light or modified duties may cease if it is determined that the employee is permanently unable to return to the job of injury. If it is determined the employee is permanently unable to return to their job of injury, the agency will begin the process of reasonable accommodation.

If the agency RTW Coordinator is unable to locate an appropriate RTW opportunity within the agency, the agency RTW Coordinator may be able to locate an appropriate transitional RTW opportunity with another state agency pursuant to BP 129 – Reasonable Accommodation.

The agency RTW Coordinator will maintain open lines of communication with the supervisor, employee, health care provider, and claims manager to monitor and evaluate the return-to-work process.

Primary roles and responsibilities for Return To Work within the EWSHS.

Role	Responsibilities
Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifies the supervisor as soon as possible of release to return to light or modified duties. • Returns to work at light or modified duties within parameters set by the agency and the employee health care provider. Keeps the supervisor and the RTW Coordinator informed of any changes in work restrictions.
Supervisor/ Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifies agency RTW Coordinator that employee is released to return to light or modified duties. • Monitors RTW process, provides feedback to the employee and the RTW Coordinator.
DES RTW Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consults with the employee, the health care provider, and the L&I claims manager to obtain work restrictions and identify light or modified job duties. Provides written description of the light or modified job duties to the health care provider for approval and release to work. • Provides copies of the approved job description to the employee, the employee’s supervisor, and the L&I claims manager with an offer of work, including starting dates and rate of pay. • Monitors RTW progress and works with the health care provider to determine if or when employee is able to return to normal job duties. Communicates with the employee, the employee’s supervisor, the health care provider, and the L&I claims manager. • If the employee is determined to be permanently unable to return to their permanent position, refers the employee for reasonable accommodation. Consults with the DES HR Consultant on reasonable accommodation process.
DES HR Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works with the agency and the DES RTW Coordinator. Provides consultation and assistance as needed. • If the employee is determined to be permanently unable to return to their permanent position, begins the reasonable accommodation process, in consultation with the agency and the DES RTW Coordinator.

WAC’s and references that apply to this policy

RCW 51.44.170 (L&I insurance)	RCW 51.32.090 (RTW compensation)
WAC 357-19-525 (employer’s responsibilities)	WAC 357-19-530 (employee responsibilities)

WAC 357-19-535 (program limitations)	
--------------------------------------	--