

Three Rivers School District

Code: GDBDB-AR
Revised/Reviewed: 1/10/05; 5/15/06
Orig. Code: GDBDB-AR

Transitional Return to Work

Purpose

Three Rivers School District recognizes that our employees are the most valuable assets to our organization. Our safety program has been designed to keep the safety and health of our employees a priority. However, should an employee sustain an on-the-job injury or illness, we must all be committed to reducing personal and economic costs while protecting the employability of those who sustain these injuries and illnesses. Consistent with creating and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace, a transitional return-to-work program may be provided. (For ease of discussion, in this document the term transitional duty can mean alternate duty, modified duty and restricted duty).

Scope

This policy covers employees who are unable to return to the assigned work duties/functions of their job due to a work-related injury or illness (as defined by Oregon's Revised Statutes and Administrative Rules governing Worker's Compensation). Three Rivers School District and the director of human resources jointly administer the program according to the following procedures. This program does not apply to injuries or illnesses that are not work-related.

Definitions

Transitional work: Alternate, Modified, and/or Restricted duty.

Alternate duty: Work not associated with the duties of the employee's regular job.

Modified duty: Work where the job duties are modified in such a manner as to allow the employee to continue to perform certain tasks.

Restricted duty: Work where the employee performs limited (number or extent) duties of their regular job.

Work-related illness: A condition or disorder caused by exposure to environmental factors associated with employment.

Work-related injury: Cut, fracture, sprain, etc., which results from a work accident or a single instantaneous exposure in the work environment.

Procedure

When an Injury or Illness Occurs:

All employees are required to report an on-the-job injury or illness to their immediate supervisors and/or the building Administrator IMMEDIATELY. If a building administrator is unavailable, contact TRSD human resources director either directly or by voicemail. A Three Rivers Accident Report (801) must be completed within 24-hours of the onset of the injury or illness.

Under no circumstances will an employee be denied medical attention if he or she feels medical attention is needed. At the discretion of management and supervisory personnel, Three Rivers School District may require an employee to seek medical attention even if the employee feels it is unwarranted.

All employees who sustain an on-the-job injury or illness will be given an informational packet. The following documents are contained within this packet:

1. A Three Rivers School District cover letter to the employee regarding on-the-job injuries and illnesses.
2. A Three River School District Accident Report (801) that must be completed by:
 - The employee (and turned in to their supervisor within 24-hours),
 - The employee's supervisor/principal (turned into the Department of Human Resources within 48-hours).
3. A copy of Three River School District Transitional Return-to-Work Program.
4. A copy of Three River School District Worker's Compensation Policy to help the employee understand how Worker's Compensation applies to on-the-job injuries and illnesses. It also outlines the employee's responsibilities for communication during time-loss and providing medical documentation.

Transitional Work Determination:

Once the employee receives medical attention, and upon filing a claim with the insurance company, the worker's compensation insurance carrier will initiate contact with the director of human resources, regarding the availability of transitional work. Transitional work assignments are considered temporary in nature and shall not develop into a regular full-time position.

The director of human resources, along with the assistance of the affected department's supervisor/manager will evaluate the restrictions issued by the health care provider. If transitional work can be identified and is available, a job analysis detailing the physical requirement of the transitional work will be prepared and submitted to the authorized attending physician and insurance company for review and concurrence. If the authorized treating physician concurs with the proposed transitional work, the employee will be notified in writing of its availability.

In some instances, the attending health care provider may approve the proposed transitional work with the stipulation of additional modifications or restrictions. In such instances, efforts will be made to further modify the transitional work to satisfy the requirements of the attending health care provider. On no account can an employee commence transitional work without the work being approved by the health care provider, and in all cases, Three Rivers School District will make a formal written offer to the injured employee.

Employees are expected to accept transitional work when it is made available. Refusal of transitional work may affect a claim's eligibility, and may lead to the loss of Workers' Compensation benefits or employment with Three Rivers School District.

Transitional Work Performance Expectations:

Three Rivers School District will make attempts to offer full-time transitional work to all injured employers when practical, but there may be times when only part-time transitional work is available. If part-time transitional work is performed, the injured worker may be eligible for loss of earnings compensation through the worker's compensation insurance carrier.

Duration of Transitional Work:

The expected duration of the employee's transitional return-to-work program is (30) thirty-days. Under extenuating circumstances, the program may be extended pending a review by a review committee, the affected department/school supervisor/administrator, and attending health care provider.

Criteria for Transitional Return-to-Work Program Extension:

The following criteria will be used in assessing whether transitional work will be extended:

1. The employee has demonstrated progress with respect to strength and endurance, and is expected to make successful transition to work within an additionally specified amount of time.
2. The nature and severity of the employee's condition requires a transitional period that would exceed eight (8) weeks. Any documented extension of the eight (8) weeks must contain a specified period of time for definitive resolution.
3. If, due to aggravation of the restrictions so that the employee's involvement in the transitional return-to-work program is temporarily disrupted, limited or modified, an extension may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

Monitoring Progress:

Three Rivers School District and the affected department supervisor/administrator will monitor the employee's progress during the transitional return-to-work period. In addition, the attending health care provider's status reports will be reviewed. In the event the employee is assigned a task that he/she feels is more physically demanding than his/her present capabilities, he/she should discuss it with the affected supervisor/administrator and/or director of human resources for a review of the work assignment.

Communications During Recovery & Transitional Work:

The employee who is on a transitional return-to-work program will visit with the director of human resources every week AND AFTER EVERY health care provider appointment (other than after physical therapy (PT) appointments) to discuss improvement in his/her physical abilities. It is the injured employee's responsibility to return from every health care provider appointment with complete written documentation of the status of any medical restrictions, even if the restrictions remain unchanged. Failure to provide Three Rivers School District with timely and proper medical documentation following such appointments may result in the suspension of the employee until such documentation is provided. With the approval of the health care provider (which may include modifications of existing medical restrictions), the employee may be upgraded to more physically demanding tasks. The ultimate goal is to return the employee to regular full-time duty in the job prior to the injury.

Medical Appointments:

Three Rivers School District expects that an injured worker will make every attempt to schedule health care provider appointments or PT sessions at the beginning or end of the working day. Whenever possible, planned PT and health care provider appointments scheduled within 48-hours of each other should be made back-to-back.

Work Performance Expectations:

While in approved transitional work, the employee is expected to complete those duties within established performance expectations (meet cycle-time, maintain good attendance, follow operating and safety instructions, etc.). All employees are therefore similarly held accountable, and failure to meet these expectations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Whereas employees on transitional duties do not have any special privileges over and above being on light duty, harassment by co-workers will not be tolerated and must immediately be reported.

