



Return to Work Information for the Injured Worker

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Injured Worker Information Series

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Return to Work Information for the Injured Worker

As a result of your work injury, you may not be able to return immediately to your normal work duties. Your treating Physician will make that decision after discussing it with you. He/she will need to know what your normal activities at work are and on the basis of your complaints and examination make the decision of what would be most appropriate for you.

Studies have shown that returning to some type of work after any injury improves the end result of treatment because remaining active helps the body to heal. However, activities must be consistent with what your physical capabilities are. There are options that you and your Physician have for returning to work after the injury.

Injured Workers can be placed in different jobs from your usual duty if necessary or your usual duty can be temporarily modified to accommodate your limitations. This is called a “light duty” or “modified duty”. As you continue to improve with treatment the restrictions will be lessened until you can return to your normal work activities. If you are taken off work completely for a brief period, you will receive a check based on the state of California’s Workers’ Compensation disability schedule.

Your Physician will put any restrictions on your work activities in writing and give it to you at the end of your visit. Your Claims Examiner will be informed of these restrictions as well. You will take this paper and bring it to your Employer. Your Employer will then make the decision as to whether or not light duty or modified duty will be available. If it is not, your Claims Examiner will be informed of such and you will then receive payments in accordance with the State disability schedule. Should you encounter difficulties once back at work with having these restrictions accommodated if your Employer said they would, you should contact your Human Resource department or your Claims Examiner. The Claims Examiner will work this out for you with your Employer.

Whether you are returning to your normal work activities (full duty) immediately after the injury or some type of light or modified duty, you are still entitled to medical treatment until you are discharged by your Physician. For example, if you are receiving Physical Therapy, you will continue to receive it while at work and accommodation will be made by your Employer to allow you to attend treatments. The same accommodation will be made to allow you to attend follow up appointments with your Physician.

Returning to work will also not affect the status of your claim. Your claim and right to medical treatment remain in effect until you are discharged by your Physician. Your Physician is your “advocate” and will continue to control your medical treatment, your work activities and the ultimate discharge from care.