

County of Elgin

Section: **8**

Human Resources Policy Manual

Subject: **Modified Work Program**

Code - **A**

Policy Number: **8.320**

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The purpose of this program is to provide a system that assists employees who have experienced an occupational or non-occupational injury, illness or diminished capacity, to return to gainful employment at the pre-injury job or at a comparable job, as quickly and easily as possible. The program will assist the worker to return to a job maximizing his/her full recovery.

To achieve this, the Human Resources Coordinator will notify the third party disability management provider of employee absences in excess of three consecutive scheduled shifts, and immediately for an occupational injury. The third party provider will liaise with the employee, the employee's supervisor, the employee's medical practitioner, the bargaining unit, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, or other suitable persons, to enter the employee back into the workplace, at a lesser capacity, if necessary.

Prior to commencement of a temporary return to work schedule, medically documented capabilities will be obtained.

In all cases of non-occupational injury or illness, the employee is required to have his/her Treating Practitioner complete any forms required by the third party provider and submit the completed forms to the third party provider as soon as possible. In the case of an occupational injury, the employee is required to have a Functional Abilities Form completed by their Treating Practitioner and submit the form back to their Manager or the Human Resources Coordinator.

In the case of an occupational injury, once medical documentation has been provided to support the need for modified duties and accommodations are offered, the third party provider will work with Human Resources and/or Manager to propose a Graduated Return to Work Schedule. The employer will temporarily provide reduced hours, reduced tasks, or a combination of both to enable the employee to work harden gradually. In the case of a non-occupational injury the employer will temporarily provide reduced hours once medical documentation has been provided to support the need for reduced hours. It is intended that whatever meaningful and productive duties are assigned, they will be within the employee's capabilities, keeping within the recommendations of the medical practitioner. The Modified Work Program will usually last no longer than six (6) to eight (8) weeks. In many situations, only a short time will be required.

If a graduated return to work is recommended by the third party provider, the employee is required to have his/her Treating Practitioner or Treatment Provider [i.e. physiotherapist,

specialist, etc.] endorse the Graduated Return to Work Schedule and return the endorsed letter to the third party provider. In the case of an occupational injury, the employee will also have to submit a Functional Abilities Form completed by their Treating Physician to their supervisor or human resources coordinator. If the GRTW Schedule is not endorsed by the treating practitioner, objective medical documentation to support the opinion must be provided to the third party provider.

If medically documented capabilities are received by way of a completed functional abilities form or an endorsed graduated return to work plan the Human Resources Coordinator will prepare a transitional work assignment (TWA) according to the medically documented capabilities received. The TWA will be reviewed with the employee and a union representative by the Manager before the employee begins their modified duties or graduated return to work plan. The employee will sign off on the TWA, acknowledging that they will only perform the duties of their position listed on the TWA, as obtained from their treatment provider, in order to ensure a safe return to work.

Throughout the program, the employee will communicate regularly with the Manager and the third party provider. The progress will be monitored throughout the program until the employee returns to full regular duties. Any changes to the program [i.e. extension, additional restrictions] must be discussed with all parties [i.e. employee, Manager, human resources, treatment provider/treating physician] and must be supported through objective medical documentation.

The co-operation and participation of all parties will result in a program that will benefit all employees of Elgin County.

The foregoing is in no way to be interpreted as a reduction of the employee's rights under the Collective Agreements or any other applicable legislation of the Province of Ontario.