

EARLY RETURN TO WORK PROGRAM

The Governing Board recognizes that when employees suffer work-related injuries, modified or light duty assignments minimize lost time and may serve to facilitate the transition back to the employee's regular duties or full time work. Whenever possible, the Superintendent or designee shall offer such employees this kind of work. Therefore, it is the policy of the Board that employees who have sustained industrial injuries or illnesses and are physically able to perform light duty or modified work, must participate in the district's early return to work program.

Under the program guidelines, modified or light duty assignments shall be designed to accommodate medical restrictions specified by the employee's physician. Injured employees will generally receive their initial medical treatment at one of the district's approved medical facilities. If the physician determines an employee is physically able to perform the functions of the regular job with only slight restrictions, the individual will be returned to that position. Should the physician notify the district that the employee is not able to perform the regular duties of the position and recommends modified work, the district's Return to Work Coordinator will consult with the employee's supervisor, then propose to the physician possible assignments the employee may perform in light of the injury. Upon review of the physical demands of the assignment, if appropriate, the physician will approve placement of the injured employee based upon the availability of work, the estimated length of the employee's healing period, or the need to move to a more demanding assignment progressing to the employee's normal job. In the case of lengthy disabilities, the injured employee may be assigned to progressively more difficult assignments over a period of time until full recovery is attained.

Transitional assignments are intended to address short-term medical restrictions. They may include work in the same job classification or a different job classification at the employee's regular salary rate. An injured employee may remain in the district's early return to work program for a maximum of six months. If the injured employee is not able to return to the regular position at the end of the six month period, the employee will be removed from the program and other options will be explored, including but not limited to, terminating employment and providing vocational rehabilitation benefits.

Transitional assignments shall not be used as a means to establish new assignments or displace other employees. Employees refusing to participate in the program upon being released to do so shall forfeit temporary disability payments.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

44984 *Required rules for industrial accident and illness leave*

45192 *Industrial accident and illness leave for classified employees*

Policy

adopted: March 8, 1999

CAPISTRANO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

San Juan Capistrano, California