

## Town of Berlin

### Transitional Return to Work Policy (TRTW)

#### Introduction

The Town of Berlin has set up a transitional return to work program (TRTW) for employees who have sustained a work-related injury. The TRTW attempts to match an injured employee's current functional limitations with temporary work assignments that either are modified in some way to match those limitations or with other task assignments that fall within established medical limitations. The contents of this program outline the philosophy and mechanics of program operation.

#### Policy

By means of temporary job restructuring, offering modified work schedules, and other methods, we seek to enhance the recovery of our injured employees by attempting to temporarily match them with duties and tasks that are within the acceptable limitations or physical restrictions placed on them by the treating healthcare provider. This program does not guarantee that traditional work assignments are available in all situations or for extended periods of time. The provision of suitable work assignments is left to the discretion of the municipality, depending on elements such as the availability of suitable tasks, payroll budgets and departmental workloads and other elements.

#### Overview

The objective of this program is to help injured employees safely recover from a workplace injury by helping them progress from transitional work duties back to their normal duties whenever possible. <sup>1</sup> All duty re-assignments under this program are temporary in nature, subject to the needs of the municipality/town.

Recovering from most injuries normally requires limiting physical activity in some manner. Going to work and performing duty assignments with reduced physical demands helps to maintain physical conditioning that will promote faster recovery and reduce the potential for permanent damage. It also helps employees maintain a sense of work ethic, self-worth and also helps maintain social relationships, all of which help speed recovery.

We communicate our TRTW to all employees at the time of hire and periodically as necessary. The TRTW commitment statement (attached) is incorporated into this policy by reference and will be posted in prominent areas as reminder to all employees of the mechanics of the program and our desire to help employees safely return to full duty after a work-related injury, when feasible.

After injuries are reported, all medical documentation from the treating provider must be provided to Dana Hadley, Town Administrator. The injured worker's supervisor will communicate with the injured worker regarding any transitional duty assignment(s). This will be

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<sup>1</sup> This program is not intended to address permanent limitations resulting from serious injuries suffered by employees, nor is it intended as an offer of an alternate job or position within the municipality.

based on documents received from the treating healthcare provider and a review of potential tasks that are available.

Town authorities are responsible for facilitating return to work and coordinating specific work activities with employees. Supervisors are required to support the municipality's efforts in this regard and also monitor employee work activities whenever possible. In all cases, supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the employee is placed in work situations and has task assignments that meet the restrictions established by the medical provider.

#### Post-Injury

The treating healthcare provider may release the employee to return to work with certain restrictions. To qualify for consideration for transitional duty assignments, the provider must provide a report which clearly identifies the injured worker's physical limitations and defines the physical capabilities of the employee. This is used to help identify possible tasks that fall within the work restrictions. In cases where it is not clear that identified transitional duties fall within the limitations established by the healthcare provider, the municipality or their representative will communicate with that provider to ensure that potential duties are appropriate for that employee.


Offers of transitional duty assignment will be provided to the injured employee using the TRTW commitment agreement to document the proposed tasks and work conditions of the transitional duties and to outline the responsibilities of both the employer and the injured worker. This written agreement will be modified from time to time to reflect changes in duty assignments and as well as changes to the employee's work restrictions.

If a situation arises where an employee feels there is an increase in pain or other symptoms that appear to be related to the original injury, the employee must immediately report that to the employer. Any further loss of time or restriction of duties must be supported by a note from the medical provider.

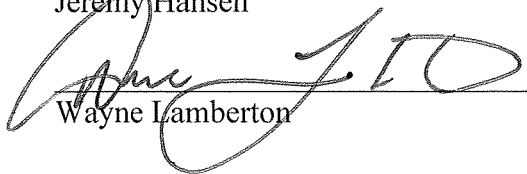
Any employee who is providing duties assigned under this policy agrees to adhere to the work restrictions established by the medical provider. The injured employee and a municipal representative will sign TRTW commitment agreement.

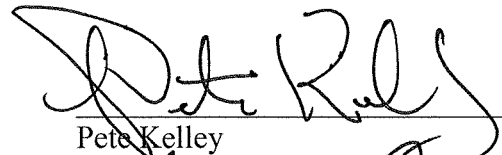
Per Vermont Worker's Compensation regulations, an injured employee who does not accept an offer of modified duty, may be subject to interruption or termination of indemnity benefits.

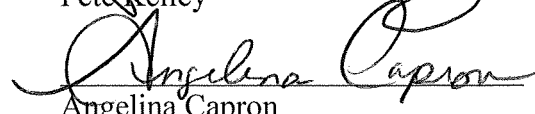
The foregoing Policy is hereby adopted by the Selectboard of the Town of Berlin, Vermont on this 4<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2018

  
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Selectboard of Berlin