

# Spartanburg County Government Policies & Procedures

Return To Work/Workers' Compensation Temporary Light Duty

Number:

Page 1 of 4

Revision #:

Effective Date:

Revision Date:

Prepared by: Terry Booker

Approved By:

## I. Purpose

Spartanburg County's policy is to keep its employees on the job, therefore a return to work program is important to the employee and the county. In a return to work program, injured employees, while recovering, are kept in a productive capacity while being protected from re-injury. Temporary light duty in a return to work program gives the employee the opportunity to earn regular wages and to maintain payroll benefits. This program is also designed to enhance self-esteem, reduce stress and speed recovery. When appropriate, light duty also preserves a skilled and stable workforce for Spartanburg County.

The purpose of the Return to Work/Temporary Light Duty Program is to temporarily place employees who have sustained **work-related injuries**, in assignments consistent with the medical restrictions prescribed by an authorized treating physician. Ideally, the employee will work within his or her own department. However, it may become necessary to place the employee in another department and/or adjust work hours to accommodate their medical restrictions. Employee training may also qualify as a Temporary Light Duty assignment.

The goal of the program is to promote psychological recovery and to minimize lost time by encouraging appropriate levels of activity for injured employees.

Spartanburg County Risk Management, working closely with the Human Resource Director, will manage the Return to Work/Temporary Light Duty Program. The employee's department head/supervisor, Risk Management, and HR Director will make decisions concerning the placement of injured and recovering employees jointly.

## II. Scope

The Return to Work/Temporary Light Duty Program is designed to help regular (full or part-time) employees of Spartanburg County who have received on-the-job injuries.

## III. General Guidelines

Temporary Light Duty is an alternate assignment for an employee recovering from an **on-the-job injury**. Work assignments are subject to the work restrictions determined by the authorized treating physician and subject to the County's work / assignment / business / operational needs. Risk Management will consult with the authorized treating physician as to the necessity for continuing the light duty assignment. Light Duty assignments cannot exceed 12 weeks (see Definition Section).

# Spartanburg County Government Policies & Procedures

**Return To Work/Workers' Compensation Temporary Light Duty**

**Number:**

**Page 2 of 4**

**Revision #:**

**Effective Date:**

**Revision Date:**

**Prepared by: Terry Booker**

**Approved By:**

A Return to Work Authorization stating any physical activity/limitations, signed by the authorized treating physician, must be submitted to Risk Management before an employee may return to work after an illness or injury (work related or otherwise).

Departments may request temporary duty assistance by submitting the Request for Temporary Light Duty Assistance (Exhibit A) to Risk Management. Departments should be innovative in developing and assigning meaningful tasks, which will allow the employee to utilize their experience, education and physical capability.

Work schedules will be arranged to permit injured employees to keep physician appointments and any prescribed physical therapy sessions.

The temporary light duty employee's home department (the department in which the employee worked at time of injury) is responsible for all salary expenses associated with the employee for the duration of their temporary duty status.

If an employee chooses not to work in an assigned temporary duty within the medical restrictions prescribed, then worker's compensation indemnity benefits will not be paid.

## IV. Responsibilities

### A. Risk Management

1. Maintain a list of available temporary duty tasks requested by departments.
2. Assign the employee, under the advisement of the health care provider, to work temporary duty, which meets the employee's medical restrictions. Consideration will be given to the employee's home department, assignment, shift, etc. However, if temporary duty cannot be arranged within the employee's home department, the employee may be assigned to a different department, if available. Placement decisions will be made jointly by the employee's department head/supervisor, Risk Management and HR Director. However, light duty assignments are subject to the County's work/assignment/business/operational needs.
3. Obtain status reports from the authorized treating physician concerning employee's health status/restrictions.
4. Notify employee's home department of the employee's temporary placement and provide updates regarding changes in the employee's medical restrictions.
5. Maintain contact with supervisor of assigned departments regarding employee's performance.
6. Maintain contact with employee regarding temporary assignment and overall health condition.

# Spartanburg County Government Policies & Procedures

**Return To Work/Workers' Compensation Temporary Light Duty**

**Number:**

**Page 3 of 4**

**Revision #:**

**Effective Date:**

**Revision Date:**

**Prepared by: Terry Booker**

**Approved By:**

## B. Employee

1. Adhere to the temporary limitations identified by his/her authorized treating physician.
2. Follow the policies of the assigned department. If the employee's work habits are not conducive to the overall effectiveness of the assigned department, then the assigned supervisor may request that the temporary employee be placed elsewhere. This request must be submitted in writing to Risk Management.
3. Advise assigned supervisor and Risk Management if assigned responsibilities fall outside of medical restrictions.
4. Return to full duty in home department upon receipt of Return to Work authorizing full duty from authorized treating physician.
5. Provide copies of all doctor's notes to Risk Management after each medical appointment.
6. Communicate any change in doctor's orders with the county Risk Management as soon as changes are received.
7. Report to work unless there is a physician's written document stating not to return.

## C. Assigned Supervisor

1. Ensure that employees in temporary duty assignments work within the identified medical restrictions.
2. Coordinate employee's work schedule and leave, making provisions for medical appointments.
3. Inform Risk Management of changes in the status of the temporary assignment and provide Risk Management with copies of all physician statements.

## V. Returning to Full Duty

Once the authorized treating physician notifies the employee and Risk Management in writing that the employee is released to return to full duty, the employee may be returned to their home department on the release day, subject to the home supervisor's discretion.

## VI. Definitions

- A. Assigned Department – department where injured employee is placed pending full medical release to job where injury occurred.

# Spartanburg County Government Policies & Procedures

**Return To Work/Workers' Compensation Temporary Light Duty**

**Number:**

**Page 4 of 4**

**Revision #:**

**Effective Date:**

**Revision Date:**

**Prepared by: Terry Booker**

**Approved By:**

- B. Authorized Treating Physician – physician who is authorized by the County's Managed Care Provider to provide treatment to County employees.
- C. Home Department – department in which employee worked at time of injury.
- D. Indemnity Benefits – benefits paid to an injured worker to replace part of wages lost as a result of a work injury. Indemnity benefits could also be benefits paid to Spartanburg County for reimbursement of sick/annual leave if employee chose to continue receiving regular wages, using sick and/or annual leave for lost time in lieu of temporary total.
- E. Temporary Total – Worker's Compensation pays sixty-six and two-thirds percent (66 2/3%) of employee's gross wages. If sick and/or annual leave is used in lieu of temporary total, it is reimbursed to the County at the rate of sixty-six and two-thirds percent (66 2/3%). Employees receiving temporary total continue to be responsible for payment to the County for the employee portion of their elected medical insurance premiums.
- F. Return to Work Authorization – written authorization, from the authorized treating physician, allowing the injured employee's return to duty.
- G. Temporary Light Duty Assignment – temporary job assignment, which meets the medical restrictions as prescribed by the authorized medical physician. Assignment is not to exceed 12 weeks.

# Spartanburg County Government Policies & Procedures

<b>Return To Work/Workers' Compensation Temporary Light Duty</b>	<b>Number:</b>
<b>Effective Date:</b>	<b>Page 5 of 4</b>
<b>Prepared by: Terry Booker</b>	<b>Revision #:</b>
<b>Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Approved By:</b>	

EXHIBIT A

## Spartanburg County Request for Temporary Duty Assignment

Department Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Department Head: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Position to Be Filled: \_\_\_\_\_

Duration of Position:      Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ End Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Days Per Week: \_\_\_\_\_ Hours Per Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Description of Duties: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### FOR SPARTANBURG COUNTY SAFETY/TRAINING COORDINATOR USE ONLY:

Temporary/Light Duty Employee Assigned: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Employee Assigned: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Spartanburg County Government Policies & Procedures

<b>Return To Work/Workers' Compensation Temporary Light Duty</b>	<b>Number:</b>
<b>Effective Date:</b>	<b>Page 6 of 4</b>
<b>Prepared by: Terry Booker</b>	<b>Revision #:</b>
<b>Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Approved By:</b>	

THIS FORM SHALL BE READ AND SIGNED BY THE EMPLOYEE. THE SPARTANBURG COUNTY SAFETY/TRAINING COORDINATOR SHALL COUNTERSIGN THE FORM AND PLACE IN THE EMPLOYEE'S WORKERS' COMPENSATION FILE.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Spartanburg County Risk Management  
Spartanburg:67042.1

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date