

SECTION:	GUIDELINE #: HR-023
Date Approved: February 3, 2020	Return to Work Plans
Revision Date:	Review Date:
Authority: Human Resources	

PURPOSE

To provide a process for the development of return to work plans to support employees who have been absent from work due to illness, injury and/or disability, and who require assistance in order to return to work.

Also refer to HR-023 Return to Work Policy.

RETURN TO WORK PROCESS

Human Resources, the employee, and their Department Head or designate will work in collaboration to develop a return to work (RTW) strategy which supports a safe and effective return.

Step 1: Identify Need for a RTW Plan

Human Resources and the employee will maintain regular contact throughout a leave related to illness or injury. As part of this process, medical documentation will be requested as required to determine when, if, and in what capacity an employee may return to work. Employees will only be asked to provide documentation pertaining to their abilities and limitations. This does not require employees to disclose their diagnoses or condition. (See HR-019 (F) Functional Capacity Assessment Form).

Medical documentation will generally support one of the following options:

- The employee has no residual functional limitations and they are able to return to their regular position with no accommodation or RTW plan required.
- The employee has temporary functional limitations and they may return to a temporary modified work environment with accommodation, or to an alternative transitional position. This will require the development of a RTW plan and/or an individual accommodation plan.
- The employee has lasting functional limitations and may return to work with permanent accommodations or are permanently reassigned to another position, unless to do so would constitute undue hardship for the employer. This will require the development of an individual accommodation plan.

Step 2: Develop a RTW Plan

The employee, Human Resources, the Department Head and/or designate, and the health care provider (if needed), will collaborate to develop a formal return to work plan. This return to work plan may also require the development of an Individual Accommodation Plan and Emergency Response Plan. (See HR-019 Individual Accommodation and Emergency Response Plans Policy).

Each RTW plan will be unique and require individual consideration. It is a good practice to analyze the various job options available to returning employees to ensure that the best options are chosen. A job task analysis may be of assistance in this process. (See HR-023 (F) Job Task Analysis Form).

The RTW plan will be documented using HR-023 (F) Return to Work Plan Form.

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Step 3: Implement, Monitor, and Review the RTW Plan

The employee, their Department Head and/or designate, and Human Resources will monitor the RTW plan to ensure that it has effectively supported the employee and the organization.

Formal reviews will be conducted near the end of the RTW Plan and/or if the employee's work location or position changes, or if the nature of the employee's illness or injury changes.

If the current RTW plan is no longer appropriate, the employee, Department Head or designate and Human Resources work together to gather relevant information and reassess the employee's needs in order to develop and implement a new plan.