

Modified (Transitional) Duty Makes Early Return to Work a Reality!

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Employee Jones, a Yard Manager sustained a work-related right shoulder injury on 8/1/05. Jones continued to work up until his surgery date of 1/11/06. Jones had a good work ethic and wanted to work to support his family. The member employer agreed and was able to find Jones a suitably safe work environment that allowed him to continue working until the date of surgery.

Use of medically set guidelines to determine the length of time a claimant will be out of work is standard practice for Nurse Case Managers (NCM) at NYCM. These guidelines were used to predict the period of disability for Jones and relayed to the member employer.

For employee Jones disability, Transitional Duty could be attempted by 2/22/06 and Full Duty by 3/22/06. In all, Jones would be out of work or experiencing some form of temporary disability for about 2 months.

ACTION TAKEN

As a condition of being a part of the Trust, Members are expected to develop **Return to Work** opportunities for injured employees by creating **Transitional Job Duties**.

This Special Trades Trust member worked directly with the Nurse Case Manager to complete an accurate Full Duty **Job Description** for Jones' position. Completing this task provided the groundwork for the member employer to also complete a modification of

these duties to temporarily accommodate the injured worker's transitional duty period. This knowledgeable employer remained open minded in regards to providing transitional duty and was thus able to readily develop a modified job description for Jones that allowed him to supervise operations in a yard office.

Jones would be able to return to work in his original department, during the same work hours and for a predetermined time period while he fully recovered. His fellow workers learned this was only a temporary position and meant to get their friend back to work safely and promptly.

NCM provided this new job description for Jones to the treating surgeon prior to a critical postoperative office visit resulting in Jones being release to Modified Duty on 2/13/06.

CHANGES THAT RESULTED

Jones' returned to work "Modified Duty" and was able to continue receiving prescribed physical therapy as well.

The Early Return to work resulted in a direct saving of \$560 in indemnity payments. Additional savings of not having to hire replacement or pay overtime and suffer drop in department morale associated with the loss of this employee's productivity.

Since Mr. Jones was able to return to modified duty sooner than expected due to the prompt actions of the employer - Full Duty release was authorized for 3/9/06 – 13 days sooner resulting in yet another savings of \$599 in indemnity payments.

Since the employer was willing to provide Modified Duty in a timely manner, it allowed the Nurse Case Manager to do what they do best - **assisting in a safe and early return to work!**