



<b>Policy Name: Transitional Return to Work</b>	<b>Policy No: S101-12</b>
Committee approval date:	-
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Revision date(s):	
Department/Division:	Health and Safety

### 1. Purpose

The Transitional Return to Work (RTW) Policy is designed for ill or injured workers and aims to safely return them to employment at the earliest possible date following an injury or illness.

### 2. Policy Statement

The Town of Pelham is committed to facilitating the early and safe return to work for employees absent from work due to illness or injury, in collaboration with the employee, health care providers, as well as the union and the WSIB, if applicable.

The Town will make every reasonable effort to provide a meaningful, productive employment environment within which individuals will maintain their dignity and respect while rehabilitating from their illness, injury or disability.

### 3. Definitions

Accommodation: an adjustment to a job or work environment that makes it possible for an individual with a disability to perform their job duties. Accommodations may include specialized equipment, modifications to the work environment or adjustments to work schedules or responsibilities and may be temporary or permanent.

Disability: any condition of the body or mind that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions).

Productive: whether the work produces an objective benefit to the employer's business.

### 4. General Provisions

Employer Responsibilities:



- Accommodate the needs of employees with disabilities on an individual basis and in a manner that respects the employee's dignity, privacy, comfort, autonomy and self-esteem;
- Support the development of the RTW program, ensuring it is fair and consistently applied for all employees;
- Participate in the identification and implementation of meaningful accommodations, as required;
- Support the continuous improvement of the RTW program;
- Provide a safe work environment.

#### Manager/Supervisor Responsibilities:

- Contribute to the identification of suitable RTW assignments and accommodations;
- Analyze the demands of each job task;
- Ensure work practices are safe and that no tasks are being assigned other than those in accordance with the recommended restrictions on the functional abilities form or on other medical information provided;
- Monitor the effectiveness of accommodations;
- Resolve RTW disputes in a timely manner, in accordance with the Dispute Procedure S101-12-02 and provide appropriate solutions;
- Communicate accommodation needs to employees and promote a supportive RTW environment;
- Participate in RTW meetings and complete progress reports, in conjunction with Human Resources.

#### Human Resources Responsibilities:

- Ensure employees' rights and confidentiality are respected during the RTW process;
- Act as the disability, claims, and RTW liaison with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) and Long-Term Disability (LTD) insurers, health care professional and service providers, and to collect and provide information as required;
- Develop return to work plans in collaboration with the employee, supervisor, health care professional, and union (where applicable);
- Initiate and maintain contact with employees on leaves (WSIB, STD, LTD) by telephone on a regular basis and when new information arises;
- Maintain records of all communication related to RTW, in accordance with the Town's record retention policy;
- Advise employees about benefits, services and entitlements available;
- Resolve RTW disputes in a timely manner, in accordance with the Dispute



Procedure S101-12-02;

- Request independent medical assessments or functional abilities evaluations, where appropriate;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the return to work program and provide a report to the senior leadership team on an annual basis.

#### Employee Responsibilities:

- Cooperate and communicate with The Town. It is expected that employees take an active role in the development of their RTW plan and supplying of all follow up information;
- Comply with medical and rehabilitation treatment and arrange appointments during non-work hours wherever possible;
- Maintain regular contact with your supervisor and/or Human Resources during periods of absence and while participating in a RTW plan;
- Attend all scheduled RTW meetings;
- Immediately communicate any concerns with your RTW plan or advise of any changes in circumstances to your supervisor and/Human Resources;
- Work safely.

#### Requesting Independent Medical Assessments

Under certain circumstances, the employer may request an independent medical assessment or functional abilities evaluation. This may be beneficial:

- In order to provide detailed restrictions to facilitate an expedited return to work;
- Dealing with a GP/family doctor that unreasonably insists on a worker being totally disabled;
- There is no objective medical documentation to support continued total disability;
- The worker is not progressing or is progressing very slowly; or
- There are concerns over the work-relatedness of the injury.

The employee will be allotted time during their regular work day to attend the appointment. Any associated costs with the independent medical assessment will be at the employer's expense.

## **5. Attachments**

Transitional Return to Work Operating Procedure S101-12-01

Return to Work Dispute Operating Procedure S101-12-02