

**RETURN TO WORK PROGRAM**

**San Luis Obispo County Community College District Cuesta College**

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**Cuesta College Return to Work Program**

To all employees:

If you feel an injury or illness prevents you from having the ability to perform your daily job duties, you must notify your supervisor as soon as possible.

It is our policy to maintain and support a Return to Work Program. This program is designed to minimize the disruption and uncertainty that can accompany an injury or illness for both the district and our employees. When an injury or illness does occur, our Return to Work Program helps make the process of returning to work as smooth and efficient as possible. This process includes the Employee, Human Resources, the Doctor, and the Employee’s Supervisor to ensure health and recovery is always given top priority.

When an on-the-job injury occurs, you can expect prompt medical attention. If the injury or an illness results in a prolonged absence from work, you may be a candidate for our Return to Work Program. This program offers a medically approved, light-duty, transitional assignment in anticipation of a return to full duty.

1. Human Resources shall be the coordinator of the Return to Work Program.
2. Human Resources will be responsible for ensuring communication, within the entire management team, about the program and how it works.
3. Employees will be notified of the Return to Work Program upon hire and after an injury or illness.
4. Human Resources may contact the first Treatment Doctor(s) and/or facility to ensure it is understood that a Return to Work Program is in place. They may be asked to:
	1. Review the physical requirements, and daily job duties, of the employee and note the restrictions accordingly.
	2. Send written notice of any status changes to the Human Resources office. Human Resources will then immediately update the Supervisor.
5. Before the injured employee may return to work Human Resources must obtain a Doctor’s release with any potential restrictions and date of follow up appointment.
6. Human Resources will coordinate an accommodation meeting with the Supervisor and the employee to discuss possible job assignments for the employee. Everyone in attendance needs to be aware of the circumstances, which may prevent the employee from working in certain work assignments. It is important an employee is not returned to work in his/her regular position without the Supervisor knowing and monitoring the work restrictions. If the employee’s job requires physical activities, which the employee cannot do, a substitute should be used and the injured employee should be assigned other duties within the restrictions, if available.
	1. Be sure each task fits the restrictions. Keep all Return to Work Program duties flexible for the entire period of time on limited duty, as required by the Doctor.
	2. Evaluate the workstation to be sure there are proper facilities to assure the employee works within the restrictions.
7. If the employee was unable to make the meeting, Human Resources will notify the employee of their job assignment immediately after meeting with the Supervisor.
8. On the day the employee reports for their restricted duties under the Return to Work Program, the Supervisor should do the following:
	1. Welcome the employee back and orient them to the work area if necessary.
	2. Remind the employee to follow the restrictions given by the Doctor.
	3. Check on the employee often to make sure the work assignment is not aggravating the injury.
	4. Work with the employee regarding the scheduling of medical appointments and allow the employee ample time to attend the appointments.
	5. Make sure the employee feels needed and appreciated to keep up worker moral.
	6. No overtime or extra duty assignment can be assigned to the injured employee if the time restrictions prevent it.
9. Human Resources, with the assistance of the Supervisor, will monitor the progress of each employee on the Return to Work Program. If the employee restrictions become permanent or semi-permanent, then the Supervisor and Human Resources will discuss the possibility of a long-term employee accommodation.
10. If the restrictions cannot be met the employee shall be placed on Temporary Total Disability and sick leave (or other available leave) will be used until such time as appropriate work is available, or restrictions are lifted. If the employee is a classified employee and is unable to return or not able to be accommodated, and after all leave measures have been exhausted, they will be laid off and added to the 39-month rehire list.
11. In order to assure success, it is important to adhere to the abilities and restrictions of the injured workers and match them most closely to the job that fits those restrictions.
12. Human Resources must obtain a letter of release from the Doctor prior to the employee returning to full duty.

If it does not appear that the injured employee will return to full duty at the end of sixty (60) days, the district will contact the Worker’s Compensation Administrator to determine the employee return to work status.

Everyone should be alert for potential accidents and hazards and strive to eliminate them. If you are aware of any unsafe act or condition, it should be reported immediately to your Supervisor to be addressed. This action may prevent an injury from occurring. If an injury does occur, the injury must be reported immediately to a Supervisor.

Types of Modified and Alternative Duty:

1. At the discretion of the employer, if the work restrictions are minor, and the regular job duties may easily be modified to accommodate the employee, the employee will be assigned to their regular work unit and/or duties. However, as the restrictions become more specific, the task assignment must also become more specific and defined. Each temporary modified assignment will be evaluated by Human Resources and the Supervisor, on an individual, case-by-case, non-precedent setting basis.
2. The purpose of temporary modified/alternative duty is not to establish new jobs or to displace other employees. It is a means the district can utilize for extra tasks and duties, that might normally not get completed timely for various reasons, to get accomplished.
3. Modified/alternative duty assignment will be re-evaluated each time a *Physician’s Authorization to Return to Work* form is submitted by the injured employee. Modified/alternative duty is not a mandatory program on the part of the district. Temporary modified/alternative duty assignments are non-precedent setting and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
4. The district shall use appropriate discretion in modified/alternative duty assignments. Types of modified/alternative duty tasks may include, but are not limited to:
5. Clerical tasks
6. Maintenance Department/Transportation
7. Classroom duties

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.