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## Early Return to Work Process

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This material is designed to provide a brief overview of the Early Return to Work Program Standard Administrative Procedure (SAP) process. For your convenience, the section of the Early Return to Work SAP is provided in parenthesis. All forms may be found in the link provided at the end of this process map.

1. When an employee experiences an injury/illness:
  - a. Follow the procedures specified in System Regulation 31.03.05 Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) (RTW SAP section 6.2).
  - b. For a work-related injury or illness, follow the procedures in System Regulation 24.01.02 Worker's Compensation Insurance Program (RTW SAP section 6.3) and the TAMU WCI website.
  - c. Determine the eligibility requirements for participating in the RTW program (RTW SAP section 3).
  
2. When the employee provides medical documentation indicating they have been released to work by the treating physician with temporary restrictions, the supervisor/department representative will determine if there is a Temporary Work Assignment (TWA) the employee may perform (RTW SAP section 4).
  - If **able** to identify a TWA, the supervisor/department representative will prepare a Bona Fide Offer of Employment (BOE)
  - If **unable** to identify a TWA, the supervisor/department representative will give the employee a Notice of inability to Identify a TWA form (RTW SAP section 8)
  - Supervisors/department representatives may consider different work locations as a temporary work assignment. An employee who meets the eligibility criteria outlined in section 2 of Texas A&M University Standard Administrative Procedure (SAP) 33.06.01.M0.01 – Alternate Work Location may request the opportunity to work at an alternate work location (AWL). Forms and procedures outlined in the AWL SAP will be followed in the event an employee requests an AWL.
  
- Note:** An employee who is eligible for FMLA may elect to refuse the BOE (RTW SAP section 6.2.1). Please contact Benefits Services at 979-862-1718 if an employee who is not eligible for FMLA leave refuses a BOE.
  
3. If it is unclear from the medical documentation whether or not the employee can safely perform the duties of their pre-injury/illness position description, the supervisor/department representative will issue the employee the TRW Physician's Packet to provide to their physician (RTW SAP section 6.4.2). The RTW Physician's Packet consists of the following items:
  - a. Physician's RTW Information Sheet
  - b. TAMU RTW Work Status Report
  - c. Information Release on Ability to Perform Job Duties Form
  - d. Employee's pre-injury/illness position description
  
4. The supervisor/department representative will review each medical update to consider whether or not a TWA is available for the employee (RTW SAP section 4) using the instructions provided in item #2.

5. The opportunity to participate in the RTW program is a temporary measure to facilitate a safe and early return to work and will not exceed 45 calendar days per injury/illness from the date the department offered the first BOE (RTW SAP section 9). The employing department should contact the Total Compensation Benefits Office in the event an employee is not able to return to work within the 45 day period.
6. All BOEs should be submitted to the Total Compensation Benefits Office for University record-keeping purposes. You may fax the information at 979/847-8546.
7. All forms and medical information regarding the injury/illness obtained in the RTW process should be maintained in a confidential medical file.

#### **Additional Information and RTW Forms**

- [System Regulation 31.03.05 – Family and Medical Leave](#)
- [SAP – Early Return to Work Program](#)
- [Early Return to Work Forms](#)
- Contact Information:
  - Benefits Services
    - Phone: (979) 862-1718
    - Email: [hrcompbenefits@tamu.edu](mailto:hrcompbenefits@tamu.edu)
    - Fax: (979) 847-8546