

## VENTURA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

**SUPERINTENDENT POLICY NO. 3514.4**

**ADOPTED: 02/14/96**

**CLASSIFICATION: General Administrative Policies**

**REVISED: 12/12/96  
05/05/08**

**SUBJECT: Temporary Modified/Transitional Assignment**

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**I. DEFINITION OF TEMPORARY MODIFIED WORK:**

Modified work assignments are temporary assignments to transitional duty to assist the injured or ill employee to progressively escalate to full duty status. This type of duty is a “transitional” process, which enables the employee to gradually resume full-time duties.

**II. BENEFITS OF ESTABLISHING A MODIFIED RETURN-TO-WORK PROGRAM:**

Modified work enhances both psychological and physical healing, thus shortening the period of time until the employee is returned to full capacity within his/her normal job. Mental attitude and rehabilitation depend to a large extent on the employee's attitude toward work, his/her supervisor and employer. If these conditions are tolerable, work is an excellent form of mental therapy.

Physicians in the field of rehabilitation admit that the difference between success and failure is more frequently a factor of mental attitude rather than physical symptoms. Minimizing lost time and disability is the primary purpose of a Modified Return-to-Work Program.

At work, the employee's mind is busy with production and interaction with other productive employees. Statistics show conclusively that the longer an employee stays off of work, the less chance there is of them ever returning. It is these cases that typically become litigated and very expensive.

A Modified Return-To-Work program is a widely recognized cost containment tool, and will benefit VCOE by reducing costs in the following areas:

- A. Claim Costs:
  - Temporary Disability Payments
  - Permanent Disability Payments
  - Litigated Costs
  - Medical Costs
  - Physical Rehabilitation
  - Vocational Rehabilitation

B. JPA Workers' Compensation Contributions:  
Experience Modifications  
Reserves

C. VCOE Costs:  
Employee Benefits Programs  
Employee Morale  
Employee Turnover  
Employee Retaining  
Substitute Employee Costs

III. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCE DOES THIS PROGRAM INTEND TO ESTABLISH NEW ASSIGNMENTS OR DISPLACE OTHER EMPLOYEES.

The program's intention is to utilize the resources of an employee for VCOE.

It has been experienced by numerous employers that most employees would prefer to return to their regular assignment. It has also been experienced that injured employees are much more inclined to "get well" if the temporary modified assignment is in lieu of remaining at home.

**Temporary Modified/Light Duty Assignment**

Any employee who suffers a work-related injury shall provide VCOE with medical verification of physical condition. Unless the treating physician provides a full release from work, the employee may be considered eligible for a temporary modified or transitional assignment. If the treating physician does not specify work restrictions, the Superintendent or designee may contact the physician to see if modified or light-duty work might be appropriate.

The Superintendent or designee shall meet with the employee and supervisor to determine whether the employee can return to his/her regular job with the medical restrictions specified by the physician.

If the employee is not able to return to the regular job with restrictions, the Superintendent or designee shall seek a temporary modified or transitional assignment for the employee. Employees who are given such assignments shall receive written notification of the assignment.

If no temporary modified or transitional assignment can be found, the employee will be placed on sick leave or other available leave to the extent available until an appropriate position within the medical restrictions is found, or until the medical restrictions are lifted. The Superintendent or designee shall also monitor the status of any employee for whom the physician provided a full release from work to see if the employee could return to a temporary modified or transitional assignment at a later date.

If an employee rejects a temporary modified or transitional assignment, this refusal may provide a basis for terminating temporary disability benefits.

Any employee returning from an injury or illness of more than five (5) days must see a VCOE-designated physician before returning to work.

The Superintendent or designee shall monitor all modified and transitional assignments and may contact the physician for assistance in determining when the employee is ready to resume regular duties.