

Return to Work

1034.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the process through which an employee, who has been off work for an extended period of time due to an injury or illness, may return to work.

1034.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Interactive process - An informal meeting between employer and employee, designed to identify the precise limitations resulting from a disability and any potential reasonable accommodations that could overcome those limitations and allow the employee to return to work, either in their usual and customary position or some other type of work.

1034.2 POLICY

It is the policy of North Whatcom Fire & Rescue to assist injured employees, to the extent reasonably practicable, in returning to work as soon as they are medically able to perform productive work for the District.

1034.3 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the employee's responsibility to inform the District of their absence and to immediately advise the District when the employee believes that they will be medically released to return to work, with or without restrictions. If practicable, the employee shall provide advance notice of their potential return to work and shall provide written medical verification of the clearance and any restrictions.

If an employee has restrictions prescribed by a qualified health care professional, it is the responsibility of the employee to ensure they are not performing work that violates any restriction. If the employee believes they have been requested or directed to perform work that violates the restrictions, the employee should make a prompt report to the Administration.

1034.4 DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES

The District will evaluate the employee's request to return to work and the written medical verification, and will consult with the Administration in order to make a determination whether:

- (a) The employee may return to full duty based on the medical verification provided by the District Occupational Physician and employee's physician of record.
- (b) The employee may return to work to a temporary modified-duty assignment if the District has a need that fits with the employee's restrictions.
- (c) The employee shall be required to have a return to work physical with the District Occupational Physician.
- (d) The employee has reached a permanent impairment rating and it is necessary to engage in an interactive process to determine a reasonable accommodation.

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The Administration, in consultation with the district representative, should make a recommendation to the Fire Chief or the authorized designee regarding the status of the employee. The Administration should communicate with the employee about plans for the employee to return to work, after consulting with the Fire Chief or the authorized designee.

1034.5 RE-ENTRY TO SHIFT

Temporary work assignments, injury/illness, and/or pregnancy related leave extending past 90 days will require all represented line personnel to participate in a re-entry process. The re-entry process will consist of a minimum of three, 8-hour day shifts (24 hours), to complete all mandatory training and review essential job functions.

1034.6 SIGNATURE APPROVAL

Approved:



Fire Chief

North Whatcom Fire and Rescue

Date:

