

TRANSITIONAL WORK	Human Resources HR-OH(III)-045
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Office of Administrative Responsibility	Occupational Health
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Overview

Eastern Health is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace for all employees. Eastern Health recognizes the importance of promoting timely recovery and early return to work to reduce the impact of absence(s) due to illness or injury on employees and the organization through effective and progressive programs and policies.

Transitional Work is one such strategy. Transitional work is a temporary program of alternate duties designed to allow injured or ill employees to return to the workplace while they continue with their medical recovery and prepare for return to their regular position.

POLICY

Eastern Health recognizes that some employees may experience difficulty during recovery from illness or injury and may be unable to temporarily perform the duties of their regular position.

Transitional Work is a temporary program of alternate duties designed to allow recovering injured or ill employees to return to the workplace while they continue with their medical recovery and prepare to return to their regular position. The purpose is to provide a period of productive alternate work until the employee is either capable of resuming duties in their regular position, or obtains a new position that is compatible with their functional abilities.

The department of Occupational Health (OH) coordinate efforts to assist employees and managers in identifying and obtaining suitable transitional work in cases where this is appropriate for an employee.

Transitional work:

- Must include goals to return to one's regular position with reliable attendance.
- Is intended to be a "bridge" to a position, whether this is the pre-injury position or another identified position.
- Is not provided for the sole purpose of generating income because the employee no longer has a paid form of leave.
- Is available to employees regardless of their benefit status (i.e. unpaid sick leave, paid sick leave, Workplace NL, Long Term Disability benefits).
- Is to be temporary, project type work, or work which is not assigned to any regular position.
- Is not work that is part of the bargaining unit or duties that form a substantial part of a regular position. Vacancies in positions should not be filled with transitional work.
 - Is provided to a maximum of 13 weeks. Transitional work may be part-time or full-time and may be offered for shorter periods as required. There is no maximum number of unique instances throughout an employee's career that transitional work can be utilized.

The employee's salary (at their regular rate) is paid by their own home program and department for all hours worked.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees (including salaried physicians) of Eastern Health and excludes paid and unpaid students, volunteers, and medical residents.

This process begins when the employer can support some or all of the functional abilities of the injured or ill employee and Disability Managers (DM) has confirmed that the employee's functional information indicates that it is not possible for them to do a return to work program in their own position.

Subject to the duty to accommodate to the point of undue hardship, the process ends when:

- the employee returns to their own or an alternate position;
- when duties defined as return to work or transitional work cannot be identified;
- it is determined that the employee cannot return to gainful employment; or
- Eastern Health is unable to offer duties within their functional abilities.

Purpose

To ensure that transitional work opportunities are offered appropriately to recovering injured or ill employees and support their recovery and return to work.

Procedure

1. Managers may independently identify and arrange transitional work duties for their employees for shorter periods (i.e. one week or less), as required. For periods longer than one week, the manager should seek the assistance and support of the DM. All plans may be documented on the [Manager's Record of Employee Return to Work](#) form. It is the responsibility of the manager to keep appropriate records.
2. Where transitional work is arranged through OH, the DM confirms from the functional information that the employee cannot return to work in their own position.
3. Where transitional work is arranged through OH, the DM confirms that the functional information on file indicates that it is safe for the employee to return to work.
4. Where transitional work is arranged through OH, transitional work should be meaningful and productive work and should be used with the same goals of progress and rehabilitation that are applied to other types of return to work programs. The DM will explain this to the employee and manager and apply this in the selection of appropriate transitional work.
5. The DM should exhaust work opportunities in the employee's own department first and then with other managers/units in their own program.
6. If no projects are available in the employee's own program, then the DM will consult with the Senior Disability Manager (SDM), who will research and present available opportunities in the organization.
7. Prior to commencing work, the DM will schedule an initial meeting with the employee, the employee's permanent manager and the manager where the transitional work will occur as applicable, to discuss the goals of the return to work plan, role clarity, and payroll processes.
8. The employee's progress should be monitored by the DM and the Transitional Work Manager throughout the transitional work. If the program is not achieving the established goals, then it should be discontinued. The manager supervising the period of transitional work, in conjunction with the DM, may decide to discontinue the transitional work at any point if reasonable progress is not demonstrated.
9. The employee will submit their time worked to the Home Program Manager and Transitional Work Manager. The Transitional Work Manager is responsible for reviewing and approving/rejecting the submitted time as per the agreement and the Home Program Manager is responsible for keying in and paying the employee.

Role of Home Program Manager:

1. To support the employee's return to work by providing appropriate transitional work duties if possible.
2. If such duties are not available within the department, to assist the DM in determining if duties are available within another department within the program.
3. To ensure that the period of transitional work is coded appropriately in the employee's payroll, using the codes WCCTTRANS for transitional work during a worker's compensation claim and RTWTRANS for transitional work during sick leave absence.

Role of Transitional Work Manager (this may be the regular manager or another):

1. To monitor progress of employee in the transitional work duties and note any concerns to the DM on a timely basis.
2. To communicate progress/issues to the employee's Home Program Manager.
3. To provide an appropriate, ergonomically correct work space and necessary supplies/equipment to perform the duties of the transitional work, based on a risk assessment.
4. To approve leaves and time entry during the transitional work.

Role of Disability Manager:

1. Communicate the goals and guidelines of the program to all parties.
2. Support the manager in monitoring the employee's progress, as requested.
3. Consult with external Case Managers and the SDM as necessary.
4. To provide support and information to the manager and employee regarding functional abilities and suitability of transitional work duties as required.

Role of Senior Disability Manager:

1. To provide support and guidance on the selection of appropriate transitional work projects for employees.
2. To assist in identifying suitable candidates for transitional work.
3. Liaison between OH, managers and/or other relevant parties on transitional work opportunities.
4. Monitor the outcomes of transitional work programs to determine the percentage that are completed successfully and how many enable employees to return to work in a long-term position.

Supporting Documents

- [Workplace NL](#).

Linkages

- [Return to Work Following an Illness or Injury policy](#) (HR-OH(III)-035)
- [Attendance Support policy](#) (HR-EH-005)

- [Managers Record of Employee Return to Work form](#) (Ch-1419)
- [Leave Benefits \(Paid\) policy](#) (HR-CB(B)-075)
- [Leave of Absence \(Unpaid\) policy](#) (HR-ER-050)

Key Words

Transitional Work; Ease Back; Project; Alternate; Return To Work, RTW; Recovery; Illness; Injury; Temporary; Functional; Abilities; Case Management; Workers Compensation; Sick; Leave; Light; Return to Work; Disability Manager; DM

Definitions & Acronyms

Bridge	A temporary means of assisting the employee in their recovery and return to a regular position.
Employees	Individuals employed by and/or receiving a pay cheque from Eastern Health including: unionized, management and management support, part-time, full-time, permanent, temporary call-in (TCI), and salaried physicians.
HCP	Health Care Provider – usually refers to treating physician but may also include physiotherapist, chiropractor, specialist, etc.
Home Program Manager	<p>The manager to whom the employee usually reports/works for, in their own position. This manager may act as the Transitional Work Manager as well, if the work takes place in the employee's own program.</p> <p>In the case of Temporary Call in, Temporary Full-time, and Casual employees working for Central Staffing the Home Program Manager is the Manager providing transitional work.</p>
Progress	Demonstrating the ability to reach pre-set goals or milestones at established time intervals.
Return to work program	A program that is designed for an individual employee to safely return to the workplace from an injury or illness, usually with modifications to duties or hours. It may include various types of programs, including ease back, modified work, transitional work or alternate work.



Transitional Work	Transitional Work is a temporary program of alternate duties designed to allow injured or ill employees to return to the workplace while they continue with their medical recovery and prepare for return to their regular position.
Transitional Work Manager	The manager assigned to supervise the employee during the period of transitional work duties.