



**Temporary Transitional Work Assignments Policy
for Workplace Injuries and Illnesses
November 10, 2022**

I. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide standardized guidelines for current City and County of San Francisco (CCSF) practices for providing employees injured at work with an opportunity to return to work at the earliest, medically approved opportunity.

II. Background

Employees who experience a workplace injury or illness are often temporarily disabled from performing their regular duties and can be absent from the workplace for extended periods of time. These periods can result in an employee losing compensation and valuable service credit. These periods can be shortened or eliminated by offering a temporary transitional work assignment (TTWA, otherwise known as “modified duty”) that includes other appropriate work that the employee can safely perform while they are recovering. Early return to work is often a key to faster recovery, to maintaining the employee’s productive connection to the workplace, ensuring the economic well-being of employees¹, and recognizing contributions a temporarily disabled employee may make to their organization. TTWA’s include temporarily adapting the employee’s usual job or locating a temporary assignment outside of the employee’s normal work area while the employee continues to recover.

Early return to work also ensures that departments can address important service needs by offering meaningful and productive work assignments to address outstanding tasks or functions, thus reducing overtime for those employees who must cover for the absent employee and reducing disability costs to the department which have been steadily increasing.

II. Policy

All departments are required to develop a program for temporary transitional work assignments (TTWA) to ensure that all employees who have sustained an occupational injury or illness are returned to work at the earliest, medically approved opportunity. Departments will work in conjunction with the workers’ compensation claims examiner, the employee’s supervisor, and the employee’s treating healthcare provider to offer temporary transitional work assignments that are consistent with the temporarily disabled employee’s medical restrictions and occupational skills and abilities.

¹ Reville, Seabury, et al. (2005) published by the RAND Center for Economic Justice found that workers who returned to the at-injury employer within two years of an injury had nearly 60 percent lower earning losses five years after an injury.

City departments must identify appropriate TTWA and tasks that could be offered to employees with temporary work restrictions. These assignments are provided for 90 days with the possibility of extending for a total of 180 days if the employee continues to show improvement as they transition back to full duty. Except for sworn public safety officers who are subject to general orders, tasks assigned may or may not be consistent with the employee's job classification so long as tasks are not generally handled by employees in higher classifications.

Employees will receive their regular pay for hours worked in the TTWA program by the at-injury department. Should employees be released for part-time work, workers' compensation temporary disability benefits will supplement the employee's wages on a wage-loss basis if applicable.

Employees who refuse to accept an appropriate temporary transitional work assignment may no longer be entitled to workers' compensation temporary disability payments. Department coordinators should immediately advise the workers' compensation claims adjuster of the employee's refusal and the steps that were taken to provide the temporary transitional assignment. The claims adjuster will provide notification to the employee if the refusal results in a discontinuation of temporary disability benefits.

Departments must identify the key contact(s) responsible for coordinating their TTWA program(s) ("department coordinator) no later than **November 30, 2022**. Information should be sent to DHR's Workers' Compensation Division email address: ccsf.workcomp@sfgov.org

This policy does not exclude the provision of temporary transitional work assignments for non-occupational injuries/illnesses, nor is it intended to locate or provide permanent modified positions for employees with permanent work restrictions.

Exempted Departments. Where a designated bargaining unit representative and the City and County of San Francisco have executed a written agreement to create a workers' compensation alternative dispute resolution program ("ADR program") the applicable department and employees will be exempt from this Policy as long as the agreement is in effect. The exempt department will pursue implementation of the purpose and objectives of this Policy through its representatives on the governing board of the ADR program.

III. Responsibilities

Workers' Compensation Claims Representative

The workers' compensation claims representative will:

1. Identify the parameters of the employee's temporary work restrictions and communicate them to the assigned department coordinator.
2. Where there are questions about the medical restrictions, the claims representative will seek clarification from the medical provider and provide them to the departmental coordinator.

3. Pay temporary disability benefits on a wage-loss basis where appropriate.
4. Notify the Departmental Coordinator of any changes to the medical restrictions, including when the employee's medical condition reaches maximum medical improvement and any permanent restrictions.

Department Coordinator:

The department coordinator will:

1. Determine whether the employee's existing assignments or tasks can be modified consistent with the medical restrictions, such as removing lifting requirements or limiting overhead work, including assignments that can be performed remotely; or
2. Identify a series of task assignments that are compatible with the employee's medical restrictions (such as completing, developing, or conducting training, updating inventory lists, working on special projects); or
3. Identify other needs within the department consistent with the medical restrictions, including temporarily reassigning the employee to another supervisor or work group.
4. Once a TTWA is identified, the department coordinator will provide the returning employee with a written description of the TTWA using the standardized template (attached) that includes the following:
 - a. A description of the TTWA
 - b. The planned work schedule
 - c. The departmental contact information for reporting progress, concerns, changes in physical restrictions
 - d. The anticipated dates of the assignment, and
 - e. Scheduled "check-ins" with the employee to support the employee's transition to work.
5. Provide the Temporary Transitional Work form developed for this purpose to the injured employee and thoroughly discuss the assignment with the employee. After signatures are obtained, provide a copy to the workers' compensation claims adjuster assigned to the case.
6. Communicate any changes to the TTWA assignment to the workers' compensation claims examiner.
7. Report back to the assigned claims examiner if unable to locate an appropriate TTWA with the efforts that were made to locate an appropriate placement and an explanation of why one cannot be provided.
8. Keep records of the assignment to ensure that the TTWA assignment does not exceed the 180-day limit.

III. Resources

The Workers' Compensation Division maintains a list of external resources to assist with the development of TTWA programs who are available to consult with departments if necessary.

Helpful articles can be found by following the links below:

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/resources/jan>

[Transitional Duty \(sagepub.com\)](#)

[ARTICLE_Fit2wrk_ClinicalEd_vol1-13.indd](#)

[CHUHTWPP- FINAL 11-7-162.pdf](#)