



## ANSWERING THE TOUGH QUESTIONS ABOUT RETURN TO WORK

Our experience with Return to Work has given us a unique perspective on creating a healthy workforce. While one-size-fits-all programs rarely fit all, employer questions and concerns remain the same:

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF RETURN TO WORK?

Return to Work programs provide the option of using **work as therapy**. When transitional duties become an extension of the medical treatment process they can accelerate recovery, decrease medical expenses, and may result in a reduction of the severity of claims.

### WHEN ARE RETURN TO WORK PROGRAMS SUCCESSFUL?

Return to Work programs are successful when they create a clear, straightforward process that everyone can understand and follow. Return to Work programs ensure fair treatment, enhanced communication, and create a positive expectation within your organization about what will happen if an injury or illness should occur.

### WILL THE EMPLOYEE STAY IN A LIGHT DUTY JOB FOREVER?

With a proper Return to Work program an employee will not remain in a light duty or modified duty job. Regular evaluations to adjust job duties are performed taking the employee's skills, physical abilities, and participation into consideration.

### WHAT IF THE EMPLOYEE REJECTS RETURN TO WORK?

While an employee's recovery may be compromised by non-cooperation, no process can force an employee back to work. Using respectful and honest approaches, appropriate options should be offered to the employee. Human Resources and/or Legal should be contacted for recommendations on action regarding an employee's refusal of a potential job offer.

### WHAT ABOUT PERMANENT RESTRICTIONS OR DISABILITIES?

The Return to Work process is specifically designed for employees who are expected to recover and return to regular work. If an employee will not be able to perform his or her previous job without Reasonable Accommodation, the employee may be a "qualified individual with disability." Your organization should handle this in accordance with your current Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended policies and procedures.

To learn more, contact your Claims Examiner, or email **[RTW@Alaskanational.com](mailto:RTW@Alaskanational.com)** or call **800-292-0588**