

Return to Work- City of Port Orchard adopts Light Duty Policy

The City received a Safety and Health Investment Project grant through the Department of Labor and Industries for a Return to Work project. The project involves the establishment a formal Return to Work program for the City of Port Orchard. The goal of a return-to-work program is the safe and timely return of employees to light duty or regular employment. Over the past year, Deborah Howard- HR Coordinator and Project Manager for the grant has collaborated with area professionals to complete ergonomic assessments, develop job analyses for all the specific jobs and establish a Light Duty Job bank within the City.

Committed to providing employees productive work during their recovery from an on the job injury or illness, the City Council adopted a Light Duty Policy on July 22, 2014 supporting a Return to Work (RTW) program. This RTW program has many benefits, such as: faster, more effective healing for the employee, containing and reducing the costs of Worker's Compensation due to employee injury and time loss, and improved morale by providing support to employees with alternate assignments during recuperation.

Management and coworker support is key in bringing an employee back who is injured on the job. As part of the grant program, the City is collaborating with LOCALGOVU and the Association of Washington Cities to develop an on line course that focuses on the importance early contact and communication with the injured employee by the supervisor and coworkers. Howard, hopes that what has been developed with this project can be shared with other cities throughout the State. Providing a proactive Return to Work program is a win/win situation for everyone.