



The University of
Montana




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DATE: January 27, 2012

TO: Department Heads and Supervisors

FROM: Royce C. Engstrom, President 

SUBJECT: Montana University System Workers' Compensation (WC) Return to Work (RTW) Policy Update

Current University of Montana Policy 406.6 and Regents' policy 713.2 state in part: "All units of the Montana University System are required to provide Modified Duty or Early Return To Work (ERTW) opportunities for all employees with temporary physical restrictions identified by the treating physician. This policy reflects a commitment to assisting injured workers as soon as possible." Recent legislative changes, through the passage of HB334, require that more be done.

New provisions to the MT Workers' Compensation Act require UM, as a member of the MUS Self-Funded Workers' Compensation Program, to make additional efforts to facilitate stay-at-work/return-to-work opportunities as soon as possible following a worker's injury. UM is taking a proactive role in strengthening its ability to provide stay-at-work/return-to-work opportunities for its employees, including temporary transitional work assignments within the physical capabilities of an employee while they heal. These efforts are being led by the UM Environmental Health and Risk Management department.

I ask each department head and supervisor, especially those with high-risk employees, to work with the Environmental Health and Risk Management personnel to develop department strategies to address the transitional period of an injured worker returning to work. If UM does not implement successful strategies, the MT Department of Labor will assign rehabilitation providers to develop such plans and opportunities on a case-by-case basis. Costs for such services will be paid for by the employee's 'time of injury' department.

It is beneficial to our employees, to the WC program, and to the long-term interest of our campus to return our employees to their 'time of injury' job as soon as medically and practically possible.

Thank you for your assistance in this area.

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