

		POLK COUNTY GOVERNMENT			
		Human Resources Department – Risk Management			
		Title/Subject:		Temporary Suitable Work Policy	
		Applies to: See Section II, below, regarding Applicability.		Effective Date:	TBD
				End Date:	Until Rescinded
X	Policy	Approved by: Polk County Board of Supervisors		Policy #	310.004
	Procedure			Procedure #	
	Other	Instruction:	No Action Required		
		Number of Pages:	4		

I. General Statement of Policy

Polk County will offer, in writing, temporary suitable work (TSW) or job assignment for qualified employees who are receiving temporary partial disability (TPD) or temporary total disability (TTD) benefits through Polk County’s workers’ compensation program. Any TSW or job assignment will be within the individual employee’s documented temporary work restrictions/disabilities as set forth by an authorized treating medical provider. The purpose of the TSW program is to provide Polk County employees the opportunity to promptly return to the work environment, act as progressive, on-the-job rehabilitation, reduce workers’ compensation costs, minimize lost productivity, minimize costs associated with replacement workers and training, and reduce unnecessary litigation.

II. Applicability

This policy applies to all Polk County employees who are receiving TPD or TTD benefits through Polk County’s workers’ compensation program.

III. Background

To facilitate prompt return to work, act as progressive, on-the-job rehabilitation, reduce workers’ compensation costs, minimize lost productivity, minimize costs associated with replacement workers and training, and reduce unnecessary litigation, Polk County will provide a written offer of TSW or job assignment to all employees with a qualifying occupational injury who are receiving TPD or TTD benefits through Polk County’s workers’ compensation program.

IV. Assignment of Responsibility

A. Management

Polk County will provide Human Resources with sufficient resources and staff capabilities necessary to facilitate this program.

B. Program Administrator

The Polk County Risk Manager is the TSW program administrator. The Risk Manager (or his/her designee) will determine and identify the availability of temporary job assignments within Polk County. If the Risk Manager (or his/her designee) finds temporary job assignment(s) available and suitable, the Risk Manager (or his/her designee) will coordinate placement in a temporary job assignment with the Department/Office heads (or their designees) with which the employee is employed and in which the temporary job assignment exists. After coordinating placement, the Risk Manager (or his/her designee) will communicate, in writing, the availability of the duties, nature of the work, the designated department (including location and identity of the temporary supervisor to whom the employee shall report), and assigned hours to the qualified employee. The Risk Manager (or his/her designee) will further inform qualified employees that failure to accept TSW or failure to object to the suitability of the assignment, in writing, can result in the discontinuation of TPD, TTD and healing period benefits.

The Risk Manager (or his/her designee) will coordinate with the supervisors of all employees participating in the program on a weekly basis to ensure the employee is progressing, meeting expectations of the program, and fulfilling the obligations of the temporary assignment.

C. Employees (Requests for Leave)

1. Employees participating in the temporary suitable job assignment are expected to report any absences to their temporary supervisor and to the Risk Manager (or his/her designee).
2. Employees with an unanticipated absence related to the occupational injury (*i.e.*, not an occupational injury related medical or therapy appointment) must be evaluated by the authorized treating physician or other approved medical provider(s) before being allowed to return to work to the temporary job assignment.
3. Employees requesting time off unrelated to the occupational injury may do so in accordance with the applicable Polk County Employee Manual(s) or collective bargaining agreement. The employees' paid leave accrual account(s) will be charged for any time utilized under this subsection.
4. Employees continue to remain subject to all employment policies during the temporary job assignment.

D. Temporary Supervisors

If a qualified employee is placed in a temporary or volunteer position within Polk County, the qualified employee's temporary supervisor is expected to coordinate on a weekly basis with the Risk Manager (or his/her designee) on the employee's progress and participation in the program.

V. Procedures

- A. Temporary job assignments, based on the restrictions established by the authorized treating medical provider and based on availability determined by the County, may consist of any of the following:
 - 1. Volunteer positions within the County;
 - 2. Temporary vacancies within the County.
- B. A qualified employee participating in a temporary suitable job assignment by filling a temporary vacancy shall not have regular wages reduced for the duration of participation. Risk Management shall pay benefits as required under applicable law, with the employing department/office paying any remaining amounts to equal the employee's regular wage.
- C. A qualified employee participating in a temporary suitable job assignment in a volunteer position within Polk County will be paid weekly compensation benefits as provided in Iowa Code sections 85.32, .33.
- D. Employees who are able to return to work at their regular job assignment with or without accommodation or modification are not considered to be participants in the temporary suitable work program. Those employees who have been temporarily disabled, but are able to return to their regular assignment will be paid their normal salary.
- E. If the qualified employee refuses the offer of temporary suitable work on the grounds that the work is not suitable, the employee shall communicate the refusal, along with the reason for the refusal, in writing, at the time the offer of work is refused. The employee will not be compensated with TPD, TTD or healing period benefits, unless the work refused is determined by Polk County not to be suitable.
- F. A qualified employee, as a condition of participating in the temporary suitable work program, shall be responsible for complying with the authorized treating medical provider's prescribed treatment plan and for contacting the Risk Manager (or his/her designee) on a weekly basis, as well as honoring all authorized treating medical provider appointments including without limitation follow up appointments and physical therapy appointments.
- G. The temporary suitable work assignment will cease when the qualified employee is released to full duties by his or her authorized treating physician or when work restrictions allow for return to his or her regular assignment.

- H. All temporary job assignments will be reviewed by the Risk Manager (or his/her designee) and the authorized treating physician after twelve (12) weeks. Employees not making progress toward the goal of returning to his or her regular position, as deemed by the County, will be evaluated for continued participation in the TSW program.
- I. If any statement contained in these procedures are in conflict with or contradict any oral conversations that have been made by any representative of the County, the terms contained in these written procedures shall override any oral statement made.
- J. The County reserves the right to change or discontinue TSW and/or any job assignments at any time for any reason.