



Return-to-Work Program

An Overview of Light Duty Assignments

Montgomery County’s Return-to-Work (RTW) light duty program is an effective strategy to retain valued employees who are unable to perform their usual and customary job duties due to an injury or illness. Through the RTW program, injured or ill employees return to work in temporary, limited, or light duty assignment during recovery. The program is coordinated by the Office of Human Resources Occupational Medical Services (OMS) team.



What is “Light Duty?”

Light duty is temporary work that is less vigorous or less physical than the work the employee performed before the injury or illness. Light-duty assignments are temporary. Non-work-related assignments do not exceed six (6) months unless authorized by the County Employee Medical Examiner at OMS. The length of work-related assignments is determined by the claims management provider (CorVel).

About the Return-to-Work Light Duty Program

The RTW light duty program supports both the employee and the County by providing meaningful light duty assignments to injured or ill employees. [See MCPR Section 8-7\(h\) \(1\) \(C\), 8-1 \(i\) and \(j\)](#) and [MCGEO Article 33.3](#).

Benefits of the Return-to-Work Light Duty Program

Employee

- Continues to receive pay during the illness or injury.
- Learn new job skills when assigned special projects.
- Saves sick pay benefits or other disability benefits for later use.
- Maintains professional and social connections with coworkers, which can support the recovery process.

Employer

- Receives assistance with special projects or tasks.
- Reduces the need to adjust schedules and train others.
- Reduces costs associated with absenteeism.

Light Duty Review Committee

The Light Duty Review Committee is a group of employees representing both the union and management. If an employee’s (home) department cannot provide a light duty assignment, the Light Duty Review Committee identifies temporary light duty assignments or tasks available in other departments. Recommendations made by the committee are sent to the Chief Administrative Officer or assigned designee for approval.

Note: If an employee is assigned a light duty task in another department, the employee will remain on the payroll of the department to which they are originally assigned.

Return-to-Work Light Duty and Workers Compensation

RTW light duty assignments are mandatory for employees injured on the job.

Return-to-Work Light Duty Application Process

Employees applying for a light duty assignment must complete an application with their department and follow the process below.

STEP 1 – Complete and submit the Return-to-Work Light Duty application forms.

- Application forms are available on the [OMS website](#) as well as from the Administrative Services Coordinator in each department.
- Two forms should be completed:
 1. Non-Bargaining Members Light Duty Request Form **or** MCGEO Light Duty Request Form
 2. Light Duty Skills Form
- The employee and the department must complete both application forms and submit them to OMS.
- OMS schedules a light duty evaluation with the employee and provides a copy of the Health Status Report (HSR) to the employee and the department.

STEP 2 – The request is reviewed for approval.

- The employee's department reviews the application and determines if a light duty assignment is available based on the HSR received from OMS.
- The department has five (5) business days to determine the availability of light duty.
- If light duty is not available within the department, the department then has five (5) working days to refer the employee to the Light Duty Review Committee.
- The Light Duty Review Committee has 10 working days to identify an alternative light duty work site.

STEP 3 – Check-in monthly with Occupational Medical Services.

- Employees performing a light duty assignment are required to meet with the County Employee Medical Examiner at OMS monthly to determine if light duty is still medically necessary or if the employee can return to full duty status.

NOTE: For non-work-related light duty, in the event of extreme circumstances where the recuperation period extends beyond six (6) months, the light duty assignment may be extended at the sole discretion of the County Employee Medical Examiner.

Work-related Light Duty Process

What happens when an employee is released to return to light duty work following a Workers' Compensation Injury?

Employee

- The employee should advise the treating physician that Montgomery County offers a light duty program.
- The employee should notify their immediate supervisor when they have been released to full or light duty work by a physician.
- The employee should notify the CorVel claims professional or nurse of their expected return to work date.
- The employee should follow instructions as directed by their supervisor and CorVel claims professional or nurse regarding the light duty assignment.
- OMS will conduct an evaluation requested by the employee or department director prior to returning to work. [See MCPR Section 8-7\(h\) \(1\) \(C\), 8-1 \(i\) and \(j\)](#). The employee brings all current medical documentation to support the need for light duty, or information may be provided by CorVel.
- The employee should advise their supervisor of any change in their medical or work status and keep the lines of communication open.
- Employees performing a light duty assignment are required to meet with the County Employee Medical Examiner at OMS monthly to determine if light duty is still medically necessary or if the employee can return to full duty status.

Employer

- The department should advise an employee that light duty options are available following a Workers' Compensation injury.
- The department should "check in" with the employee occasionally during their recovery period.
- If the department receives a full duty release from the employee, the department should forward it to CorVel to confirm the employee's return-to-work date.
- If the department receives a full duty release directly from CorVel, the department should be prepared to provide a return-to-work date for the employee.
- OMS will conduct an evaluation requested by the employee or department director prior to returning to work. [See MCPR Section 8-7\(h\) \(1\) \(C\), 8-1 \(i\) and \(j\)](#). The employee is given a copy of the HSR as well as the department supervisor and HR Liaison, who will look for a light duty assignment within the department.
- If the department is unable to locate an assignment within the department, they should refer the employee to the Light Duty Review Committee to identify a light duty assignment. If an employee is assigned a light duty task in another department, the employee will remain on the payroll of the department to which they are originally assigned. The length of work-related light duty assignments is determined by CorVel.
- The department should ensure that the employee performing a light duty assignment meets monthly with the County Employee Medical Examiner at OMS to determine if light duty is medically necessary or if the employee can return to full duty status.

Non-work-related Light Duty Process

The injured or ill employee meets with the County Employee Medical Examiner at OMS to determine if light duty is medically necessary. The employee brings all current medical documentation to support the need for light duty.

The County Employee Medical Examiner completes an HSR detailing the restrictions. The employee receives a copy of the HSR. OMS staff also email a copy of the HSR to the supervisor and HR Liaison.

The department supervisor/HR Liaison looks for a light duty assignment within the department.

If the department supervisor/HR Liaison are unable to locate an assignment within the department, they should refer the employee to the Light Duty Review Committee to identify a light duty assignment. If an employee is assigned a light duty task in another department, the employee will remain on the payroll of the department to which they are originally assigned.

Non-work-related assignments do not exceed six (6) months unless authorized by the County Employee Medical Examiner at OMS based on medical condition. The department should ensure that the employee performing a light duty assignment meets monthly with the County Employee Medical Examiner at OMS to determine if light duty is medically necessary or if the employee can return to full duty status.

Light Duty Process: Department Responsibilities

In addition to the process steps detailed above for work-related and non-work-related light duty, the department is responsible for:

- Providing the employee with the description of the light duty assignment prior to the start date.
- Providing the employee with the light duty start date.
- Providing the employee with light duty work hours or assignment information.
- Providing the employee with contact person information during the light duty assignment.
- Following up with the employee to ensure they meet with the County EME monthly while on light duty.

Questions or Concerns

If you have any questions regarding light duty assignments, please contact dpm@montgomerycountymd.gov or call 240-777-5118.

For questions regarding work-related light duty, please email angela.wiley-jones@montgomerycountymd.gov.