

## Frequently Asked Questions Early Return to Work: Injured Workers

### **What is an Early Return-to-Work Program?**

It is a plan set up by an employer so injured workers can return to work more quickly and safely while they heal – either with changes to their regular job or in a temporary, alternate work assignment.

### **Why would my employer want me back at work before I am released to full duty?**

In most cases, some work is better than no work. Your employer will benefit from your being able to help the company in some way, even if it is not in your regular job.

### **My doctor filled out a form DWC 73 at my last appointment. What is that?**

The [DWC 73](#), also called the work status report, is the form your doctor fills out to tell about the parts of your job you can safely do - such as lifting, standing, and driving. A copy is given to you, your employer and insurance carrier.

### **What happens to my benefits if my doctor releases me to work with restrictions, but my employer does not have any modified or alternate work for me?**

You will keep receiving Temporary Income Benefits (as long as you are qualified\*) if your doctor releases you to return to work with restrictions, but your employer doesn't have a job that meets your medical restrictions.

### **What if my doctor says I can go back to work, but I don't think I can?**

If your employer makes you a bona fide offer of employment, and you choose not to take the offer, you may lose your Temporary Income Benefits.

### **What exactly is a bona fide offer of employment?**

It is an employer's letter offering modified or alternate work to an employee within his/her medical restrictions.

### **What must be included in the bona fide offer?**

- • A copy of work status report (DWC 73) that the offer is based upon.
- • The location, schedule and pay for the job.
- • The physical and time requirements of the position.
- • A statement that the employer will only give tasks within the employee's physical abilities, knowledge and skill, and will provide training if necessary.

### **What happens to my benefits if I go back to work?**

If you are receiving Temporary Income Benefits, your weekly benefit check may be suspended while you are working, or reduced, depending on what actual wages you earn. If you return to work and later your doctor takes you back off work, your checks may be restored, if you are still eligible.\* Your medical benefits continue, as long as it is for reasonable and necessary treatment that is related to the injury.

My doctor told me that I will never be able to do my regular job again, because it requires very heavy lifting. I don't know how to do anything else. Is there somewhere that can help me learn a new job?

Yes, the [Texas Rehabilitation Commission](#) is a state agency that can help in certain situations.

*\*You are eligible for Temporary Income Benefits as long as you have disability and have not reached Maximum Medical Improvement.*