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Transitional Return to Work Program (TRTW) Policy

Introduction. Fair Haven, VT has set up a transitional return to work program (TRTW) for those employees who sustain a **work-related** injury. The TRTW seeks to match an injured employee's current functional limitations with temporary work assignments that are either modified in some way to match those limitations or with other task assignments that fall within established medical limitations. The contents of this program outline the philosophy and mechanics of program operation.

Policy. By means of temporary job restructuring, offering modified work schedules, and other methods, the Town seeks to enhance the recovery of injured employees by attempting to temporarily match them with duties and tasks that are within acceptable limitations or physical restrictions placed on them by the treating healthcare provider. This program does not guarantee that transitional work assignments are available in all situations. The provision of suitable work assignments is left to the discretion of the Town, depending on elements (e.g., availability of suitable tasks, payroll budgets, and other elements).

Overview. This program intends to help injured employees safely recover from a **work-related** injury by helping them progress from transitional work duties back to their normal duties whenever possible. **This program does not address permanent limitations resulting from serious work-related injuries suffered by employees, nor does it an offer of an alternate job or position within the municipality.** All duty re-assignments under this program are temporary in nature, subject to the needs of the Town.

Recovering from most injuries normally requires limiting physical activity in some manner. Going to work and performing duty assignments with reduced physical demands helps to maintain physical conditioning that will promote faster recovery and reduce the potential for permanent damage. It also helps employees maintain a sense of work ethic, self-worth, and helps maintain social relationships, all of which help speed recovery.

The Town will communicate its TRTW to employees at the time of hire and periodically as necessary. The TRTW commitment statement (attachment) is incorporated into this policy by reference and will be posted in prominent areas as a reminder to employees of the program's mechanics and the Town's desire to help employees safely return to full duty after a work-related injury, when feasible.

After injuries are reported, all medical documentation from the treating provider must be provided to the Town Manager. The Town Manager, or the injured worker's immediate supervisor as delegated by the Town Manager, will communicate with the injured worker regarding any transitional duty assignment(s). This will be based on documents received from the treating healthcare provider and a review of potential tasks that are available.

The Town Manager and an injured employee's immediate supervisor are responsible for facilitating return to work and coordinating specific work activities with employees. Supervisors are required to support Fair Haven's efforts in this regard and also monitor employee work activities whenever possible.

Post-Injury. The treating healthcare provider may release the employee to return to work with certain restrictions. To qualify for consideration for transitional duty assignments, the provider must provide a report that clearly identifies the injured worker's physical limitations and defines the physical

capabilities of the employee. This is used to help identify possible tasks that fall within the work restrictions. In cases where it is not clear that identified transitional duties fall within the limitations established by the healthcare provider, the Town or their representative will communicate with the provider to ensure that potential duties are appropriate for that employee.

Offers of transitional duty assignments can be provided to the injured employee using the "*TRTW Commitment Agreement*" to document the proposed tasks and work conditions of the transitional duties and to outline the responsibilities of both the Town and injured worker. This written agreement can be modified from time to time to reflect changes in duty assignments and as changes occur to the employee's work restrictions.

If a TRTW Commitment Agreement is used, the injured employee and the Town Manager will serve as the signed parties to the agreement.

Per Vermont Workers' Compensation regulations, an injured employee who does not accept an offer of modified duty, may be subject to interruption or termination of indemnity benefits.

Transitional Duty/Task Listing. The following table lists tasks and/or jobs that could be used to fulfill transitional duty requirements. This list is not comprehensive but, rather, attempts to provide a starting point for the Town when considering transitional task assignments.

TRTW Task/Job/Department	Functional Requirements

Adopted this 5th day of January, 2015 by the Fair Haven Selectboard.

Christopher Cole, Chair

Robert Richards

Jeffrey Sheldon, Clerk

David Ward

Roderic Holzworth, II

Transitional Duty Commitment Agreement

This agreement intends to document an offer of transitional duty assignments and outline Town and employee responsibilities for working within established medical restrictions, as outlined by the treating healthcare provider. In no case should the employee exceed the provider's restrictions or perform duties not listed on this form. This agreement is used when transitional duty assignments are offered in response to work-related injuries. Any offer of transitional duty (including tasks, hours or work, etc.) is made at the Town's discretion, subject to duty availability, funding, employee skill sets, and other operational and employment considerations.

The **Town** agrees to:

- Review the work restrictions outlined by the healthcare provider with the employee prior to work assignment. The provider may be consulted to clarify restrictions and permitted tasks.
- Provide a safe work environment for injured workers who have work restrictions. This includes a commitment to monitor the workload of injured employees and solicit input from them periodically during the performance of their duties to ensure that the work provided falls within their restrictions and is not causing additional injury.
- Provide work that generally falls within the work restrictions outlined by the treating healthcare provider. The Town may provide modified duties that are "more protective" of the employee, at its discretion.

The **injured worker** agrees to:

- Strictly adhere to the work restrictions provided by the healthcare provider and to the list of modified duties outlined below. **In no case is the employee authorized to exceed his/her work restrictions or perform tasks not identified below.**
- Communicate the presence of unusual pain, worsening, or change in symptoms (to the injured body part or any other body part or system).
- Bring to the attention of management any situation(s) where he/she is at risk for injury.
- Communicate to the Town Manager or the injured employee's immediate supervisor any situations where he/she feels the work requires actions, motions, or procedures that force the employee to exceed the work restrictions.

The duties listed below fall within restrictions provided by the healthcare provider. The duties and work schedule assignments are outlined as follows:

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(Attach separate sheets as may be necessary.)

Town of Fair Haven, VT
Transitional Return to Work (TRTW) Program Policy

We the undersigned agree to fulfill our obligations outlined herein.

_____ _____
Employee Date

_____ _____
Town Manager Date