

## Return to Work

### 1035.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the process through which an employee, who has been off work for an extended period of time due to an injury or illness, may return to work.

#### 1035.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Interactive process** - An informal meeting between employer and employee, designed to identify the precise limitations resulting from a disability and any potential reasonable accommodations that could overcome those limitations and allow the employee to return to work, either in their usual and customary position or some other type of work.

### 1035.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Fresno County Fire Protection District to assist injured employees, to the extent reasonably practicable, in returning to work as soon as they are medically able to perform meaningful work for the District.

### 1035.3 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the employee's responsibility to inform the District of his/her absence and to immediately advise the District when the employee believes that he/she will be medically released to return to work, with or without restrictions. If practicable, the employee shall provide advance notice of his/her potential return to work and shall provide written medical verification of the clearance and any restrictions.

If an employee has restrictions prescribed by a qualified health care professional, it is the responsibility of the employee to ensure he/she is not performing work that violates any restriction. If the employee believes he/she has been requested or directed to perform work that violates the restrictions, the employee should inform the supervisor who requested or directed the work that the employee cannot perform the work because of his/her restrictions. The employee should then make a prompt report to the Administrative Officer regarding the employee's belief that his/her assignment would have violated his/her restrictions.

### 1035.4 DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES

The District will evaluate the employee's request to return to work and the written medical verification, and will consult with the Administration in order to make a determination whether:

- (a) The employee may return to full duty based on the medical verification provided by the employee.
- (b) The employee may return to work to a temporary modified-duty assignment and whether the District has a need that fits with the employee's restrictions.
- (c) The employee should have a fitness-for-duty evaluation.

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- (d) The employee has reached a permanent and stationary rating and it is necessary to engage in an interactive process to determine a reasonable accommodation.

The Administration, in consultation with the District representative, should make a recommendation to the Fire Chief or the authorized designee regarding the status of the employee. The Administration should communicate with the employee about plans for the employee to return to work, after consulting with the Fire Chief or the authorized designee.