

Guidelines for Contact with Employees Off Work Due to an Injury or Illness

The University's Return-to-Work Program assists employees temporarily or permanently unable to perform the essential functions of their regular work due to either a work related or non-work related injury or illness. This Program is designed to review prescribed work restrictions and determine whether the University can provide temporary or permanent modified or alternate work.

Some employees might be temporarily unable to return to work due to their injury or illness. When this occurs, the employee's supervisor should regularly contact the employee until he/she is able to return to work. When contacting an employee, supervisors should follow the following guidelines.

- 1. When to Call:** Twice a month, or more often if important information needs to be communicated. Calls should be made during regular work hours.
 - 2. What to discuss:** The purpose of regular contact is to show concern and support for the injured or ill employee, and to help answer any questions they may have. Typical remarks/questions may include:
 - *"We miss you at work and want you to know that we are thinking about you."*
 - *"How are you doing?"*
 - *"Do you have any questions or concerns? I'll help if I can, or if not, I'll put you in touch with someone who can."*
 - 3. When Not to Call:** Sometimes it is not helpful to call an injured or ill employee. Inappropriate circumstances might include the following:
 - The employee specifically asks you not to call.
 - The employee seems to be angered by your calls.
 - You have a history of conflict with this employee and believe they may view your calls as a form of harassment, discrimination or retaliation.
- In the cases above, call the University's Workers' Compensation Program Manager at extension 2824. The Program Manager will maintain contact with the injured or ill employee on your behalf.
- 4. What Not to Discuss:** The goal of contact is not to interrogate the employee, investigate their injury, or do anything that can be interpreted negatively. Therefore, remember:
 - Do not ask questions directly or indirectly designed to "check up on" the employee or to "catch them in a lie". If the employee's injury seems suspect to you, let the Program Manager deal with that issue.
 - Do not ask for medical information such as diagnoses, treatment or prognosis.