

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE**

Refer to: DPM

ALBUQUERQUE AREA INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE CIRCULAR NO. 99-01

LIGHT DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

Sec.

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1. **PURPOSE.** The purpose of this circular is to establish policy for the Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service (AAIHS) for light duty assignments. This policy will provide guidelines for employees who have been injured and/or have a temporary medical condition that prevents them from performing the full range of their duties. These light duty assignments may consist of a modification of the duties of the employee's current position or a detail to another position, which does not exceed the documented medical limitations.

2. **PROCEDURES.**

A. **Office Worker's Compensation Program (OWCP) Duty.**

Employees who are injured **on-the-job** and who cannot perform the full range of duties required by their position must provide their supervisor with appropriate medical documentation as soon as possible after being seen by their physician. The employee in question should have properly filed a report of injury on Federal Employee's Notice of Traumatic Injury and Claim for Continuation of Pay/Compensation (Form CA-1) and the Duty Status Report (Form CA-17). The CA-17 should be completed by the supervisor and by the treating physician. The treating physician will give the necessary information for appropriate light duty. Light duty assignments will continue until such a time when the light duty assignment will not be feasible to AAIHS, or the employee is able to resume their regular duties.

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- B. **Non-OWCP Related Light Duty.** Employees who have medical conditions **not related to their work** that prevents them from performing the full range of their assigned duties will be provided with light duty within their current assignment. If the employee is otherwise unable to perform the essential functions of their position, they could then be considered for assignment to another area during the duration of their light duty. They may be detailed to another position pending the resolution of their medical condition, but limited to a maximum detail of six months. Light duty assignments for these employees are, in all cases, a temporary measure. If the light duty is to be for more than six months or is permanent, such an assignment will not be made.
- C. **Work Assignments.** All light duty assignments must meet both the medical restrictions of the employee and the needs of the AAIHS. If the circumstances warrant, light duty assignments may require a change in the employee's work schedule. Such changes would be made only to meet the legitimate work needs of the affected service.
- D. **OWCP Light Duty-Premium Pay.** Employees who earn "premium pay" such as night differentials, Sunday differentials, holiday pay, etc., would continue to earn "premium pay" during their light duty assignment, provided they actually performed work during the premium pay period. An employee who is given a light duty assignment outside of their normal work environment would be compensated by OWCP for their "premium pay".

3. **RESPONSIBILITIES.**

A. **Employees**

1. **OWCP Light Duty.** It is an employee's responsibility once approved by his/her treating physician for light duty, to notify his/her supervisor as soon as possible. Recommendations for accommodation by the employee's physician are requested. The employee shall provide a light duty assignment/release in a timely manner and provide adequate medical documentation to his/her supervisor in support of the request. In addition, the employee is responsible for abiding by the medical and work restrictions imposed by the treating physician. Such specifics should include limitations on lifting, standing, and walking, or length of work shift. The limitations listed **must** also be linked to a specific diagnosis giving rise to the need for them, prognosis of the length of injury and the expected date of return to full capacity. **If an employee fails to provide the supporting documentation, an accommodation may not be provided.**

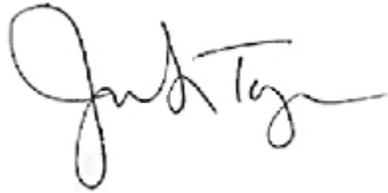
2. **Non-OWCP Related-Light Duty.** An employee who has a medical condition not related to their work who is requesting a light duty assignment based on his/her condition, is expected to provide their supervisor with medical documentation sufficient for a determination to be made as to the feasibility of the request. The documentation must list the specific medical limitations placed on the employee. Such specifics should include limitations on lifting, standing, and walking, or the length of work day. The limitations listed must also be linked to a specific diagnosis giving rise to the need for them, prognosis of the length of injury and the expected return to full capacity which fully meets the job requirements. **If an employee fails to provide the supporting documentation, an accommodation may not be provided.**

B. **Supervisors.** Supervisors are responsible for following the procedures outlined in this policy and for insuring that employees under their supervision with light duty assignments do not exceed the medical restrictions under which they are working.

1. **OWCP Light Duty.** When a supervisor receives a light duty request from an employee or employee's physician, the supervisor must determine if the request is related to an on-the-job injury. If it is, short-term light duty will be arranged immediately consistent with medical limitations. Generally, it is best to assign light duty in the service to which the employee is normally assigned. If that is not possible, the Division of Personnel Management will work with local Management to find a short-term light duty assignment. A light duty assignment will continue until the employee is able to resume the full duties of his/her position or until a determination is made that a permanent placement in another suitable position, or separation from federal service is warranted.
2. **Non-OWCP Related-Light Duty.** When a supervisor receives a light duty request from an employee whose medical condition is not job related, the supervisor must determine if the request meets the standards of adequacy listed in Section 3., "Responsibilities", paragraph A., "Employees". If the documentation is sufficient, the supervisor must determine whether or not it is possible to alter the essential duties to accommodate the medical restrictions and still have the essential duties of the position performed without creating an undue burden to the agency.

C. **Service Unit Directors/Division Directors.** Service Unit Directors/Division Directors are responsible for insuring that the provisions of this policy are adhered to in their respective service units/programs.

- D. **Division of Personnel Management.** The Division of Personnel Management is responsible for providing guidance and assistance to operating officials administering this policy and for coordinating inter-service light duty placements.
4. **REFERENCE.** 5 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 610, 5 United State Code, 20 CFR, Part 10.
 5. **SUPERSEDURE.** This new issuance will replace AAIHS Circular 98-01, "Light Duty Assignments," dated January 20, 1998, in its entirety.
 6. **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This circular is effective upon date of signature and shall remain in effect until cancelled or superseded.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James L. Toya". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

James L. Toya
Area Director
Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service