

Purpose:

- 1 The purpose of this policy is to:
 - (1) Facilitate return to work from injury and illness, which cause both short and long term absence, and lessen frequent casual sick leave.
 - (2) Help employees achieve maximum possible physical and mental fitness.
 - (3) Provide for the acquisition of new skills and knowledge and the assumption of new responsibilities where an illness or injury makes it impossible for an employee to resume the responsibilities of a previous position.
 - (4) Offer assistance with the learning or relearning of skills needed in everyday activities, with occupational training, and with psychological readjustment.
 - (5) Provide an administrative framework for the rehabilitation of employees.

Policy Statement(s):

- 2 The City of Red Deer believes that:
 - (1) Occupational rehabilitation primarily benefits the employee;
 - (2) Rehabilitation should commence as soon as possible following injury or illness;
 - (3) Every effort should be made to return ill/injured employees to their former jobs. The return to work may be managed by assigning the employees, in consultation with the treating physician, to suitable duties. Employees may have to be rehabilitated with modified work or alternative work outside their usual jobs;
 - (4) Successful rehabilitation requires the involvement, co-operation and commitment of employees, management, unions, and the treating physician;
 - (5) The employees, themselves, must assume considerable initiative and responsibility for the development of their individual programs. Rehabilitation should recognize and capitalize upon the assets of the individual (and will vary according to his/her needs and characteristics); and
 - (6) Rehabilitation efforts should be reviewed and assessed regularly to determine effectiveness, and adjusted in response to new demands and situations.
- 3 The City of Red Deer will manage a rehabilitation program, which will aim to:
 - (1) Provide employees, in consultation with their treating physician, an early safe return to meaningful and productive work.
 - (2) Provide re-employment of the occupationally disabled through on-the-job and formalized training, equipping the employee to assume a productive role utilizing abilities and newly acquired skills.
- 4 Components of the Program:
 - (1) Counselling: To assist the employee in adapting to the disability, changing life style and financial implications, if applicable.
 - (2) Return to Work: Given the need for rehabilitation, employees able to return to work will be assigned meaningful work that is suitable (modified or alternate work) if it is available.

Employees no longer capable of doing their previous job as assessed by the treating physician will be given usual consideration for available positions if they are qualified.

- (3) Training: Employees who are being rehabilitated may be supported by necessary training or other reasonable assistance. Both formalized and on-the-job training are allowed under the program if they are considered the best approach to rehabilitation. Formalized external training will only be considered when:
 - (a) All suitable, in-house training opportunities have been exhausted;
 - (b) The individual probably could not secure an alternate position within The City without some formalized training; and
 - (c) Proposed training is viewed by the Occupational Health Nurse and the Human Resources Manager as the most viable approach to rehabilitation of the affected employee.
- (4) Compensation: Income continuance may be provided for the employee's financial needs during the period of disability through the provisions of the Sick Plan. Pay rates for employees involved in on-the-job training will be equal to their rate received under the Sick Plan provisions or the appropriate rate for the position in which they are retraining, whichever is greater. Employees will be eligible for any benefits to which they would actually be entitled in the execution of their duties and responsibilities. Departments will absorb salary costs for the rehabilitating employee's position replacement. A Rehabilitation Fund in the Human Resources Department budget will absorb the cost of alternate work in other departments.
- (5) Outplacement Assistance: Employees who cannot be reintegrated into the work-force may receive counselling and help in job searches.

5 Eligibility:

- (1) Employees become eligible for the rehabilitation program by:
 - (a) Being designated by the physician as "occupationally disabled".
 - (b) Receiving long-term benefits under the Sick Plan.
 - (c) Receiving short-term benefits when there is a reasonable chance that the medical conditions will become chronic in nature.
 - (d) Receiving Workers' Compensation benefits.
- (2) Eligibility factors considered are:
 - (a) Length of time on Sick Plan;
 - (b) Motivation and attitude of employee regarding rehabilitation; and
 - (c) Physical and mental ability to undertake rehabilitation.
- (3) Not eligible are:
 - (a) Employees designated as totally disabled on the basis of medical evaluations made by a physician or psychiatrist.
 - (b) Employees eligible for retirement and unreduced pension (i.e. 85 factor or 65 years of age).

6 Timeframe:

- (1) A Rehabilitation Plan will be developed as soon as possible after the employee's injury or illness in order to maximize the benefits of rehabilitation to both the employee and the organization.

- (2) The Occupational Health Nurse, when made aware of a possible long term employee illness/injury, will contact the employee and the treating physician to plan a return to work program. The physician will determine the candidate's suitability for rehabilitation.
- (3) An outline of the most appropriate type of rehabilitation program for the individual's needs and objectives will be prepared by the Occupational Health Nurse, in consultation with the physician and the employee, identifying the extent and expected duration of the rehabilitation.
- (4) The Personnel Officer responsible for staffing and the Occupational Health Nurse will arrange placement of individuals in positions or training programs consistent with the objectives established in the rehabilitation outline. Where on-the-job training is required, they will try to locate individuals in their own Departments.
- (5) The Occupational Health Nurse will regularly monitor the rehabilitation efforts of employees to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.
- (6) Decisions having monetary impact (e.g. tuition fees, books, medical aid supply costs, WCB salary) will be made by the Human Resources Manager. A final appeal can be made to the City Manager.
- (7) Upon expiration of Sick Plan Benefits and rehabilitation, the following options are available to the employee:
 - (a) Continuing employment with The City of Red Deer at the rate of pay established for the position being filled; or
 - (b) Terminating employment with The City.

Definitions:

- 7 **Formalized Training:** rehabilitative training involving course work from either internal or external sources.
- 8 **On-The-Job Training:** is assigned rehabilitative training in a position in The City of Red Deer's staff complement.
- 9 **Rehabilitation:** is the coordinated use of medical, psychological, social, educational, and vocational measures for restoring the individual to an adequate level of functional ability.
- 10 **Suitable Rehabilitation Duties:**
 - (1) Are duties:
 - (a) Within capabilities of employee;
 - (b) Upgraded as work capacity increases;
 - (c) Which do not aggravate the illness or injury;
 - (d) Helpful to the employee;
 - (e) Helpful to the employer; and
 - (f) Which help to restore employee's confidence in his/her work capacity as well as self-esteem.

- (2) These duties can be assigned in the form of:
 - (a) Modified Work which is similar to the employee's usual work except that the work is modified by one or more of the following:
 - (i) decreasing work hours;
 - (ii) scheduling alternate days; or
 - (iii) limiting job responsibilities.
 - (b) Alternate Work which is different than the employee's usual work. This can mean orienting a worker for different tasks in a different department to accommodate physical and mental restrictions.
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References/Links:

- I EL-A-2.2 Treatment of Employees

Scope/Application:

- I This policy applies to all staff.

Authority/Responsibility to Implement:

- I Occupational Health Nurse:
 - (1) Work with all departments to ensure the integration of disabled employees back into the workforce;
 - (2) Provide a liaison between the physician and The City of Red Deer;
 - (3) Provide recommendations on appropriate alternate and modified work strategies; and
 - (4) Monitor the employee's progress through the program.
- 2 Human Resources Manager:
 - (1) Provide direction to ensure consistent application in all areas; and
 - (2) Adjudicate concerns directly related to monetary issues and the administration of this program.
- 3 Department Heads and Supervisors:
 - (1) Identify work/positions that can be utilized for rehabilitation purposes for their and other department's employees, thus ensuring appropriate opportunities exist for partially disabled employees to return to work as soon as possible.
- 4 Employees:
 - (1) Cooperate with those directing the rehabilitation effort.

Inquiries/Contact Person:

I Inquiries may be directed to the Occupational Health Nurse, Human Resources department.

Policy Monitoring & Evaluation

I This policy will be reviewed every three years and revised as necessary.

Document History:

Date:	Approved/Reviewed:	Title:
Approved: January 23, 1993		
Revised: January 2001	"Norbert Van Wyk"	City Manager