

Pinellas County Schools

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**Workers’ Compensation Program**

* ***and -***

**Light Duty Program**

**Information Guide**



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*What do Principals, Managers and Supervisors need to know about Workers’ Compensation and the Light Duty Program:*

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Workers’ Compensation Guidelines

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The purpose of this guide is to orient Principals, Managers, and Supervisors through the Workers’ Compensation process should an employee become ill or injured. Our intent is to help you understand your role and responsibilities so proper procedures are followed and compliance is maintained.

# Why do I need guidelines on Workers’ Compensation?

If a work-related injury or illness does occur, you want to be prepared. It is important to review and understand this guide before an injury/illness occurs. It is important that you respond quickly and fairly. Please take the time to become familiar with the comprehensive services available to Pinellas County Schools as outlined in this guide.

# Pinellas County Schools Workers’ Compensation Program

Pinellas County Schools provides Workers’ Compensation benefits for its employees pursuant to Chapter 440 of Florida Workers’ Compensation Law. Injuries and illnesses arising out of or in the course of employment will be covered.

The intent is to assure the injured employee receives quick and efficient delivery of disability benefits and quality medical care and to facilitate the workers’ return to gainful employment as soon as medically reasonable

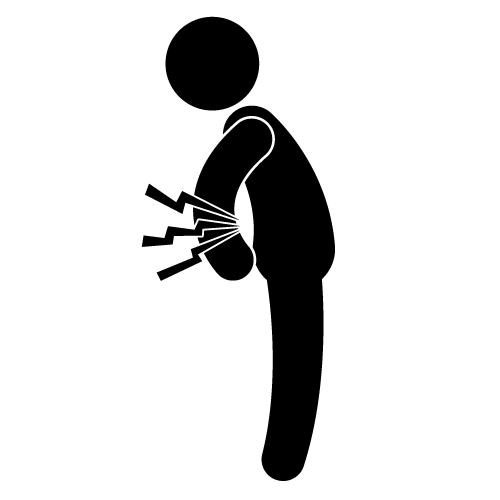
1. PCS is self-insured (claims payment come directly from PCS operating budget and bank account.)
2. PCS uses a third party administrator to process our workers’ compensation claims. (Davies Group)
3. All work related injuries or illness (whether or not medical treatment is necessary) should be reported within 24 hours according to Pinellas County Schools guidelines or as soon as you become aware of the injury.
4. If a report is filed late or if the claim “compensability” is unclear, the claim will be investigated by an adjuster at Davies Group prior to any medical treatment being authorized. The adjuster will make the decision about whether the claim will be accepted or denied.
5. Employees, by Florida law, must report the claim no later than 30 days.
6. All claims are filed with employee’s cost center, especially traveling employees (Behavior Specialists, Nurses, Psychologists, Drop-out Prevention, etc.)
7. Registered Volunteers’ and Substitute teachers’ injuries are also to be reported as a workers’ compensation claim. (Substitute claims are completed by the school they are subbing for the day of the injury.)
8. In general, once an employee exceeds one year without treatment, the claim is closed.
9. PCS has a network of physicians who treat workers compensation. All initial care must be from the approved urgent care list (WC). Subsequent specialist visits and therapy are authorized through nurse case managers at Davies Group.
10. Employees are not responsible for the doctor bills as long as the carrier approves the doctor they are seeing. If employees see a doctor without approval, they will be responsible for the bill. Please contact Risk Management if this happens at your school 588-6196.

# Your Responsibilities as a Principal, Manager, or Supervisor

Prior to a work-related injury or illness:

The duties may vary according to each cost center and location but the main duties will be as follows:

1. Become familiar with this Guide prior to a Workers’ Compensation claim occurring.
2. Maintain a safe environment for employees and visitors.
3. Communicate Workers’ Compensation procedures to all new staff and at least annually to all staff.
4. Have a working knowledge of the forms and systems relating to the WC process and follow established procedures for WC claims processing.
5. Report workplace injuries per established processes when made aware of an accident or incident of illness.
6. Investigate accidents to determine cause and implement procedures to prevent future accidents where necessary.



Following a work-related injury or illness

Generally the manager or supervisor is the first on the scene of an injury. Create a supportive environment for injured workers, even if there are suspicious circumstances. Treat every injury as legitimate. The first 24 hours after the injury are critical and can mean the difference between a costly, prolonged claims process and a smooth return to work.

1. Respond to injured employee

* Stop and assist the employee. Make immediate contact with the injured worker to get the facts.

1. Make sure employee receives the medical attention needed.
2. Each supervisor should know:
   * Who the medical caregiver is going to be
   * Where the closest providers are located
   * Which ambulance or other transport service will be used in emergency situations
3. Provide the employee with the following:
   * Employee Responsibilities for Work-Related Injuries (see Appendix).

Note: A copy of the DWC-1 and RX Notices will print out to provide to the employee once entered in the Davies Group *ClaimsVISION* website. If it is not an emergency situation, this needs to be provided to the employee prior to them leaving to seek treatment.

* + Employee Workers’ Compensation Claim Worksheet (see Appendix)

# Reporting a Claim for an Injured Worker

Employee Steps:

When an employee is injured, the employee must complete the ‘Employee Workers’ Compensation Statement Claim Worksheet’, and turn it in to the department/school secretary after the employee and supervisor sign it.

To access this form, follow these steps:

* PCSB.org ◊ Departments & Divisions ◊ Risk Mgt. & Insurance
* Go to the bottom left corner and click on Workers’ Compensation. You will find:
  + - Employee Workers’ Compensation Claim Worksheet
    - Workers’ Compensation Provider List of Authorized Urgent Care Centers



* + - Davies Group *ClaimsVISION*  Reporting Instructions

Principal / Manager / Supervisor Steps:

1. Once the employee has submitted the Claim Worksheet, the Principal, Manager, or Supervisor must complete the First Report of Injury for WC online at the Davies Group *ClaimsVISION* website. Refer to next section on Davies Group for more information.
2. Pull any available video which will provide supporting documentation of the accident.
3. Obtain witness statements if available.
4. Refer to the FMLA section if they are out over 10 days from work to determine next steps.
5. Treat the employee with dignity and respect. If an employee is out longer than ten days for an injury, it is recommended the supervisor make a brief phone call to the injured worker communicating care and concern. If possible, we recommend periodic communication (i.e. call, email, card) be sent to the employee while he or she remains your employee and is out of work.

# Who is Davies Group and how do We Access Their System?

Davies Group is the workers’ compensation company that administers, processes, authorizes and pays Pinellas County School’s workers’ compensation claims.

Accessing Davies Group *ClaimsVISION*:

1. You must have a user name and password to report a claim through the internet. If you have not been provided a user name and password, please contact Risk Management at 727-588-6196.
2. Only authorized staff may access Davies Group *ClaimsVISION*  Reporting System because it contains confidential employee information. Risk Management suggests authorizing staff members who handle payroll such as the secretary/bookkeeper, Café Mgr. and HPO (if possible).
3. You can access the Davies Group Workers’ Compensation website by following the steps below.
4. PCSB.org
5. Departments & Divisions
6. Risk Management & Insurance
7. (bottom left corner) Workers’ Compensation
8. Scroll down to bottom and click on “Davies Group” (it’s just above the dark bold lettering “**Other Resources**”) or [https://dcna.pcisvision.com/](https://zkpcrycab.cc.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001AQTTsh04V9uaq0SRThq8QYN0eNVKfh8XPuIooTcCwMF3M590BJbpeANU6bec60Ag5PwbGjf-s2qa3gi_YISFp9-Dof876IGKuyHHeic1nnE9hYeT-trSntYf1ptoj_bCG5o0tHH3RmEpDGrYJJ-PH9tyFOktc-Ec&c=a6DgXWGy7l5Skfq5fi61OY4IRK4h3Y8cCq5TQ6zuoHybSGoP1OT_iQ==&ch=kh-OEXPKHjGchN6cyia6ns5TaP-yTBhTE4Kcsn6HgOTzFlQt9CfCog==" \t "_blank)
9. HINT – **Microsoft Edge** is the best browser for this application
10. There is a link on the Risk Management department site under Workers’ Compensation (referred to in #3 above) that provides Davies Group *ClaimsVISION* Reporting Instructions.

# Workers’ Compensation Claims Process

What Expenses are Covered:

1. A copy of employee’s DWC-25 (doctor’s note) will need to be turned in to the secretary or supervisor after each doctor visit to a Walk-In Clinic or Specialist.
2. If the injured employee’s doctor requests additional follow up visits to the walk-in clinic, outpatient testing or physical therapy, they may need to schedule appointments outside of the normal work day, since these absences will not be paid under workers' compensation.
3. In some instances, however **specialists'** visits may be covered by **In Line of Duty Pay** if appointment hours are not available outside the normal work schedule. Many imaging centers have extended service hours, including evening and Saturday hours.

Risk Management will pay In Line of Duty/Workers’ Compensation for the following:

1. Employee’s first visit to Pinellas County Schools Authorized Walk in Clinics.
2. Initial Physical Therapy Evaluation.
3. Specialist visit that can’t be scheduled around employee’s work day.
4. Please be sure to enter this time into TERMS as “Sick – Illness in line of duty” and our office will work with payroll to reverse and pay workers’ compensation.
5. Send **Certificate of Absence** to Risk Management by fax to 727-588-6182.

Workers’ Compensation Leave of Absence & In Line of Duty Pay:

1. If an employee has an injury that requires absences to extend beyond ten days, as directed by the workers’ compensation doctor, a Request for Leave of Absence/FMLA Workers’ Compensation must be completed and submitted to Personnel by department/school secretary.
2. The employee’s DWC-25 or workers’ compensation doctor’s note will serve as documentation for the leave of absence. This will also allow employee’s health/dental and vision insurance benefits to be properly billed and their job protected.
3. Once Risk Management receives a copy of the doctor’s slip taking an employee out of work, the school or department secretary (or the employee who handles payroll) must complete a certificate of absence.
4. The first 10 lost work days (In Line of Duty Days) will be covered from Pinellas County Schools, payable at 100% (maximum of 10 days paid per fiscal year of claim). This will be paid through the normal Pinellas County Schools payroll process.

For example: if you work 6.5 hours per day X 10 days = 65hrs of ILOD pay. This does not use sick or vacation time.

1. However, it should be reported to payroll as sick time when it is entered. If no sick time is available, then it can be coded with vacation time (12 month employees only) or no pay if the employee has no time available.
2. A copy of the Certificate of Absence must be scanned and emailed to Risk Mgmt.
3. After this period, wages will be paid through our workers’ compensation carrier, Davies Group at 66 2/3% of the employee’s average weekly wage, up to a yearly state maximum.
4. The school/department secretary will need to continue sending a copy of the certificate of absence to Risk Management until the employee returns to work or leave changes from paid status to an unpaid status.

Light Duty Program (LADs):

Refer to Section 2 - ‘Light Duty Guidelines for Managers’ for more information.



# FMLA and Workers’ Compensation

Employees that have an illness or injury under Workers’ Compensation must be placed on a formal leave of absence if their absence exceeds 10 working days.

Leaves of Absence are administered through Human Resources. Please contact the Human Resources department for specific questions.

Medical leaves for the employee may fall under:

* Family Medical Leave Act
* The school board provisions/union contract of a Regular Medical Leave

The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 allows you to take a leave of absence, without pay, for up to 12 weeks during any continuous 12-month period, during certain situations. An employee is eligible for family medical leave if you have worked for Pinellas County Schools for one year and have worked at least 1,250 hours during the previous 52 weeks prior to requesting the leave.

For more information on FMLA, please refer to the District Bylaws and Policies Manual under ‘3430.1 – FMLA Leave’.

To access the ‘Request for Leave of Absence’ form online, follow these steps:

1. PCSB.org
2. Departments & Divisions
3. Central Printing Services and Forms
4. PCS Forms
5. ‘R’ Forms and select ‘Request for Leave of Absence’ Form #3-137. (see Appendix)
6. Employees can make a voluntary and un-coerced acceptance of a light duty assignment while recovering from a serious health condition.
7. Employers cannot require employees to take a light duty job in lieu of a family medical leave of absence**.**
8. If a reduced work schedule or intermittent leave is requested under the Family Medical Leave Act, the employer can require the employee to transfer temporarily to an alternative position during the intermittent leave in order to accommodate recurring periods of leave**.**
9. If the employee requests a light duty accommodation, but no work is available on a temporary basis, the employer should designate the leave as FMLA (if eligible).

# Preventing Injuries

PCS is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all employees. Everyone has a responsibility to work in a safe manner and not put themselves or others at risk. This includes

* Complying with applicable policies and procedures
* Using personal safety gear
* Observe warning signs
* Learning about potential hazards
* Reporting any unsafe condition

As a Principal, Manager or Supervisor, it is your job to do everything you can to help protect your employees from accidents that threaten their work and well-being. You should make your employees feel comfortable asking questions and reporting dangerous situations -- make them feel safe to be safe.

You are best positioned to support your employees. It is important to reinforce and model safe and healthy work practices to those under your direction. Specifically you need to:

* Provide health and safety training and guidance on safe work practices
* Provide proper equipment
* Observe work practices and correct as needed

You and your staff can make a difference through your efforts both to prevent and to correct potential problems. These efforts may require an initial investment of time, but with some attention can become integrated into your day-to-day operations. The long-term results will pay off with benefits for all.



**Frequently Asked Questions on Workers’ Compensation**

**Who is covered by the Risk Management Workers’ Compensation Program?**

Every employee in Pinellas County Schools is covered under Workers’ Compensation, including volunteers and registered volunteer students.

**Where should I send an injured employee for medical treatment?**

If an injury requires non-emergency treatment, you should direct the employee to one of the authorized [urgent care centers](http://www.pcsb.org/cms/lib8/FL01903687/centricity/domain/200/PCS_Provider_Network2013.pdf) on our website and posted at your location. In a medical emergency, call 911 for emergency assistance. Following emergency medical treatment, an employee must follow up at an authorized urgent center for further treatment or referrals. If a specialist or additional treatment is needed, Davies, our third-party administrator, will choose the physician and facility.

**What benefits are provided under workers’ compensation coverage?**

Workers' compensation provides all necessary medical care resulting from a work-related injury when ordered by a doctor. Employees are reimbursed for travel costs associated with mileage to and from the doctor, hospital, or other places of treatment. If the employee’s authorized doctor indicates the employee is temporarily unable to work in any capacity, the employee will receive temporary total wages, up to a yearly state maximum. If the employee is released with temporary restrictions and cannot be accommodated at the worksite, the employee will receive temporary partial wages.

**How quickly must a first report of injury be completed?**

The injury report should be entered in the Davies system within 24-48 hours to prevent any delay in treatment or provider billing. Under FL Statute, an employee claim may be reported within 30 days of the injury. However, if you are in doubt whether to report the claim, please contact risk management at 588-6196 for further guidance.

**When should an injured employee schedule appointments?**

If an employee’s doctor requests additional follow up visits, outpatient testing and treatment or physical therapy, an employee may wish to schedule appointments outside of his/her normal work day, since these absences would not be paid under workers’ compensation (his/her personal sick time may be used.) In some instances, however, specialists’ visits may be covered if appointment hours are not available outside of the employee’s schedule and in-line duty days are still available.

**What can you do to assist in the process?**

We recommend you take an active role in the recovery of your employees. It is very important that the injured employees know that their school or department is concerned about their well-being and recovery. A card or call to the injured worker is invaluable. Notify Risk Management if the employee’s work status changes; i.e., begins to lose time, returns to work, or if the employee retires or terminates.

**Can I terminate an employee on workers’ compensation?**

It is illegal to terminate an employee for filing a workers’ compensation claim. However, if the employee is not following established safety rules, you may counsel the employee as a safety violation, providing you consistently treat everyone the same and do not discriminate.

**Must the employee be released to full duty before they can return to work?**

No. An employee’s doctor may release him or her to modified duty. Whenever possible the district will provide for up to ninety (90) calendar days, light or modified duty for any employee returning to work after a job-related injury. Reasonable accommodations will be made in accordance with restrictions of the authorized treating physician. (Board policy 1420, 2420, and 3420).

**What should you do if there is suspected fraud involving workers’ compensation?**

If you have obtained information which you feel indicates fraud may be involved in a workers' compensation claim, you should immediately report such to Risk Management to further investigate.

**What is Family Medical leave?**

An employee has a right under the Pinellas County Schools Leave of Absence policy (and Federal regulations) for up to 12 weeks of unpaid or paid (if the employee has sick or vacation time available) leave --in a floating 12 month period for the following reasons:

– A serious health condition of the employee\*

– To care for an employee’s spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition

– Birth of a child

– Placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care

\*In some circumstances, a leave for a serious health condition may be intermittent.

**Who is entitled to Family Medical Leave?**

Employees are eligible for family medical leave if they have worked for PCS for at least 12 months prior to the request for the leave, and have worked 1250 hours or more during that period.

**Is the employee’s job protected while on family medical leave status?**

• If an employee is eligible for a family medical leave, Pinellas County Schools must restore him/her to the position that he/she held prior to his/her leave or an equivalent position.

• An equivalent position is one with equivalent pay, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment.

• If an employee’s leave continues beyond the 12 weeks of authorized family medical leave, his or her additional leave is considered a “Regular Leave”. An employee’s job is not always protected under a Regular Leave.\*\* --However, a manager must consider the American Disabilities Act (ADA) and reasonable accommodations

**How are an employee’s insurance benefits affected when he/she is out on a medical leave of absence?**

• If the employee is on a family medical leave or is on a paid leave (through sick or vacation hours), the employee is eligible to receive the board contribution towards insurance.

• If the employee is on a regular unpaid medical leave, the employee may continue his/her insurance, however he/she is responsible for the full cost of the insurance.

• When an employee is no longer receiving a paycheck--the Risk Management department bills the employee for insurance through billing coupons mailed to the home.

• The employee may qualify for a health insurance waiver after exhausting family medical leave. This waiver allows the employee to continue his/her health insurance while the school district pays the full cost of insurance (employee and Board contribution). In order to qualify for this benefit the employee’s doctor must complete a waiver application and state the employee is completely and totally disabled.

\* If the employee is **not** placed on a leave properly and in a timely manner, the employee’s ability to continue insurance coverage is jeopardized and the cost of the insurance is increased dramatically.

Light Duty Guidelines for Managers

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Balancing Competing Requirements of the Law: Americans with Disabilities Act, Family Medical Leave Act, and Florida Workers’ Compensation

# Why do I need guidelines on Light Duty?

As a manager, it is very likely that at some point you will have an employee present you with a physician’s note requesting light duty accommodations. This may be due to a personal illness or a work-related accident. These may be temporary restrictions or permanent restrictions. Will you know how to respond?

Our intent is to provide useful information to principals, supervisors and department heads of all work locations regarding practices and protocols dealing with light duty requests. The Americans with Disabilities Act, Family Medical Leave Act, and Statute 440 under Florida Workers Compensation laws were used a reference in the development of all light duty procedures.   
  
Our goal is for all district staff to be consistent and lawful in applying light duty policy and procedures.

**Americans with Disabilities Act**

**Light Duty as a Reasonable Accommodation**

Pinellas County Schools, as a state governmental employer, is covered under the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), which is interpreted and enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

ADA protects qualified individuals with a disability. A request for light duty accommodations *may or may not* be considered a reasonable accommodation. In order to make a determination about the nature of the employee’s medical condition and whether the employee might be considered a qualified individual with a disability under the ADA, the employee and or manager should contact the Pinellas County Schools’ Office of Equal Opportunity at (727) 588-6285.

1. Under ADA a person has a disability if he has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. ADA also protects individuals who have a record of a substantially limiting impairment, or who are regarded as having a substantially limiting impairment. A substantial impairment is one that limits or restricts a major life activity such as hearing, seeing, speaking, breathing, performing manual tasks, walking, and caring for oneself, learning or working. It does not cover disabilities that have a limited duration or have no long-term effect.
2. An employee with a disability must also be qualified to perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodations, in order to be protected. This means the employee must :
3. satisfy the job requirements for educational background, employment experience, skills, licenses, and other standard job related qualifications, and
4. be able to perform those tasks that are essential to the job, with or without reasonable accommodations.

Regular attendance is an essential function of virtually all jobs, and an individual who cannot attend work regularly may not qualify as “able to perform the essential functions of the position.”

3. Reasonable accommodations may include for example,

* Acquiring equipment or devices
* Job restructuring
* Part-time or modified work schedules
* Reassignment to a vacant position
* Providing readers and interpreters

It is a violation of the ADA to fail to provide reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of a qualified individual with a disability, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the School Board. Undue hardship means that the accommodation would require significant difficulty or expense.

# Workers’ Compensation

Pinellas County Schools provides Workers’ Compensation benefits for its employees pursuant to Chapter 440 of Florida Workers’ Compensation Law. Injuries and illnesses arising out of or in the course of employment will be covered.

It is the intent to assure the injured employee receives quick and efficient delivery of disability benefits and quality medical care and to facilitate the workers’ return to gainful employment as soon as medically reasonable.

**Employees return to work with *Temporary* Light Duty Restrictions**

1. If the authorized treating workers’ compensation physician states in writing that the injured/ill employee is able to return to work to perform modified duty (on a temporary basis), the principal/manager affected shall be advised to make provisions within the school or department on a temporary basis.
2. If placement of the employee with restrictions within the department or school is not feasible, the principal or manager should notify Risk Management. Risk Management will then assist in the placement in the LAD program within the school district.
3. Work site accommodations or Light Alternative Duty (LAD) participation is not to exceed a total of ***90 calendar days***. If the employee’s restrictions or accommodations of such are approaching the 90-day calendar limit, the principal or manager should notify Risk Management.
4. If the employee is unable to return to the original position within 90 calendar days of modified duty, he/she will be placed on a FMLA (if qualified) in accordance with school board policy.

**Employees return to work with *Permanent* Restrictions**

1. Once the authorized treating physician states in writing that the injured/ill employee has permanent restrictions, the employee will be evaluated for the ability to return to his/her original position and perform the essential functions of the job with or without accommodations.
2. The principal or manager should contact Personnel Human Resources before filling the original position on a permanent basis.
3. If the employee cannot return to his original position because of permanent restrictions, the employee will be placed in a comparable position based on availability. The employee must meet the minimum qualifications and perform the essential functions of the new job with or without accommodations. Placement will not result in a promotion.
4. If a comparable position is not immediately available, and the employee has not exhausted any eligible family medical leave, the employee will be placed on a leave. During the leave period, the employee, in conjunction with Personnel, will seek employment within his restrictions and qualifications. Benefits will be granted upon leave of absence provisions.
5. If the employee has reached Maximum Medical Improvement (MMI), with permanent restrictions that cannot be accommodated, but has already exhausted FMLA, the employee, in conjunction with Personnel, will seek employment within the appropriate restrictions and qualifications. The employee may check the Employment – All Available Jobs website at [PCS Employment - All Available Jobs](https://ats3.searchsoft.net/ats/app_login?COMPANY_ID=OA002067) for current open positions.
6. The Personnel department will inform the injured employee of available positions for which the employee is qualified and arrange interviews on the employee’s behalf. If the employee is extended a job offer, but the employee elects not to take the position, the employer will have no further obligation to continue the job search. If the employee is a claimant under workers’ compensation, continued wage loss benefits, if applicable under Florida Workers Compensation, may cease.
7. An employee shall receive priority placement for open positions within the school system for which the employee is qualified. The principal/manager affected shall be advised of a pending placement and shall be given an opportunity to provide input, including the filing of objections, in writing.
8. In the event a written objection is filed, a representative from the departments of Personnel and Risk Management shall meet with the principal or manager to attempt to resolve the problem. If the meeting does not resolve the placement issue, the matter shall be referred to the Asst. Superintendent Human Resources, and the Asst. Superintendent, Office of Equal Opportunity
9. If the placement matter is still unresolved, Asst. Superintendent Human Resources, and the Asst. Superintendent, Office of Equal Opportunity shall meet with the Associate Superintendent for Human Resources & Public Affairs whose decision in the matter shall be final.

# LAD Program (Light Alternative Duties program)

The Light Alternative Duties Program (LAD) is designed to offer temporary alternative work sites where an employee who is injured *in the line of duty* can continue to work during the healing/rehabilitation process. Employees receive their regular rate of pay for hours worked.

This program is coordinated through Supporting Services Personnel and Risk Management.

1. Employees are eligible to enter this program if the illness or injury occurred within the course and scope of their employment. The employee will be considered for placement under the LAD program if the employee cannot continue to perform a modified version of work at his regular work site.
2. Once placed, the LAD participant becomes virtually a “free pair of hands” to a new work site. The work site supervisor is responsible for keeping attendance on the employees assigned to their work location, and reporting their time to the payroll department. However, the funding will continue to come from the Risk Management and Insurance’s workers’ compensation budget.
3. The job assignment that the LAD participant is assigned to should have a beginning and end date, ***not to exceed 90 calendar days--*** this would include previous days that have been accommodated at the school or department work site. The employee, principal or department supervisor, and the LAD placement coordinator should all have a clear understanding of the job duties involved. All assignments will take into consideration the employees medical limitations/restrictions recommended by the workers’ compensation doctor.
4. LAD participants may not work more hours than what they worked prior to the injury, such as overtime, and in some cases less, as ordered by the authorized treating physician.

For more information about the Light Alternative Duties Program,

please contact Risk Management at 727-588-6196.

**\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \***

**If your school or department is interested in supporting this program, and receiving a “free pair of hands” on a temporary basis, please feel free to contact Risk Management. Risk Management will determine if this is a viable work solution, and will work with your department or school to establish a temporary job description, with specific duties listed that the employee can perform at your location within the LAD program.**

# Workers’ Compensation -- Employee Vocational Rehabilitation

The Division of Workers’ Compensation provides vocational evaluations, and training and education screenings. The Division is also authorized to expend monies for the actual training and education costs incurred by an injured worker. Employees who are unable to return to their original job, and do not have the skills necessary to seek employment within the school district are encouraged to apply for this benefit.

\* If an employee cannot return to his original position because of permanent restrictions, then he will be placed in a comparable position based on availability. He must meet the minimum qualification and perform the essential functions of the new job with or without accommodations. Placement will not result in a promotion.

If a comparable position is not immediately available, an employee will be placed on any family leave if eligible. During this leave period, the employee, in conjunction with Personnel should seek employment.

**Frequently Asked Questions on Light Duty**

1. **If I am off due to an on the job injury, and my employer offers me light duty, do I need to accept it?**

If you are out with a workers’ compensation injury and you also qualify for family medical leave at the same time, and a light duty assignment is identified and available, you are not required to take the light duty assignment, however, your workers’ compensation temporary total (lost wages) benefits will cease.

1. **I am pregnant, and my doctor recently gave me a doctor’s note with a 10 lb. lifting restriction, which makes me unable to temporarily perform the essential functions of my job as a plant operator. Does ADA protect me? Is my employer required to provide me a light duty job?**

No. Although you have a physical impairment (your pregnancy is treated like any other illness), it does not substantially limit a major life activity if it is of limited duration and will have no long-term effect. Your employer is not obligated to provide light duty work.

1. **I was injured on the job. Must I be released to full duty before I can return to work?**

No. Your doctor may release you for modified or light duty work before you reach maximum medical improvement. (MMI is a term used to describe the point in time when the treating physician believes the injured worker has recovered as much as he or she is going to). Your supervisor will attempt to provide you a modified position within your restrictions on a temporary basis—not to exceed 90 calendar days.

If work is not available at your original work site, the personnel department will work with you through the LAD program. This is a district wide program designed to offer a temporary alternative work site within the district, where you can function during the healing process.

1. **What if my doctor says I cannot return to my original position?**

Once the authorized treating physician states in writing that you have permanent restrictions, you will be evaluated for your ability to return to your original position and perform the essential functions of the job with or without accommodations.

If you cannot return to your original position because of permanent restrictions, then you will be placed in a comparable position based on availability. You must meet the minimum qualifications and perform the essential functions of the new job with or without accommodations. In this regard, placement will not result in a promotion.

**Appendices**

***Online link shown below each form name***

*Note: Forms may change periodically so be sure you have the most recent version by using the links or referring to the Workers’ Compensation website under Workers’ Compensation.*

* Employee Responsibilities for Work-Related Injuries

*and*

Employee Workers’ Compensation Claim Worksheet

[Employee Responsibilities for Work-Related Injuries & Claim Worksheet](https://www.pcsb.org/cms/lib/FL01903687/Centricity/domain/200/workers%20comp/Claim%20worksheet.pdf)

* + Request for Leave of Absence

<https://ess.pcsb.org/EmpSS/Employee_Forms/LeaveOfAbsence/LOA_Directions.pdf>

* + Work-related injuries requiring 911 transport or an injured employee is treated in the Emergency Room.

[PCS Workers' Compensation Guidelines for 911 Calls and Emergency Room Treatment](https://www.pcsb.org/cms/lib/FL01903687/Centricity/Domain/200/PCS%20WC%20Guidelines%20for%20911%20Calls%20and%20Emergency%20Room%20Treatment.pdf)

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# PCS Workers’ Compensation Guidelines

## Work-related injuries requiring 911 transport *or*

## An injured employee is treated in the Emergency Room

When a school or department experiences a 911 transport for an employee injured in the line of duty and/or treated in the emergency room, the following steps should be followed in addition to your normal communication with the Area Office:

1. Upon being released from the hospital (or as soon as possible the next day), please contact the injured worker and advise them to follow up at one of the authorized workers’ compensation Urgent Care Centers. A list of Pinellas County Schools’ authorized Urgent Care Centers is attached to this email for your convenience.

In many instances, the emergency department provides discharge paperwork and suggests that the patient follow up with his or her personal physician or may indicate remaining out of work for a period of time. **However, for work related injuries, the employee is still required to follow up at an Authorized Urgent Care Center for any lost time or further medical treatment to be covered under workers’ compensation.**

After the initial emergency department visit, our urgent care centers will be the only authorized treating facility for workers’ compensation and will address the injured workers’ status regarding work restrictions (i.e. lifting restrictions, remaining home or reporting to work). Only restrictions given by the authorized Urgent Care Centers will be recognized under workers’ compensation.

1. Once the school/department receives a form from the workers’ compensation doctor (DWC-25), a decision will need to be made regarding accommodation of injured workers’ restrictions. A representative from the school should contact Risk Management to provide information regarding the status of the injured worker and his/her restrictions.



7-15-25

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

**Pinellas County Schools Administration Building**

301 4th St. SW, Largo, FL 33770

*For information regarding Workers’ Compensation or if you would like to provide feedback regarding this guide, please contact:*

**Risk Management & Insurance**

Phone (727) 588-5087 or (727) 588-5088

Fax (727) 588-6182

*For information regarding Family Medical Leave and light duty*

*for non-work-related injuries contact:*

**Area 1 and Area 4 Personnel** (727) 588-6289

**Area 2 and Area 3 Personnel**  (727) 588-6285

**Transportation & Walter Pownall**  (727) 588-6376

**Administrative Personnel** (727) 588-6278

*For information regarding Americans with Disabilities Act and reasonable accommodations contact:*

**Office of Equal Opportunity**

Phone (727) 588-6285

[**PCSB Office of Equal Opportunity**](https://www.pcsb.org/Page/644)

*Workers’ Compensation Provider contact information:*

**Davies Group**

Phone (800) 749-3044

<https://dcna.pcisvision.com/>