

What is Light-Duty Work Restriction?

What exactly does light-duty work restriction entail? Read on.

VINELAND, NEW JERSEY, UNITED STATES, November 9, 2018
/EINPresswire.com/ -- +

THE LAW OFFICES OF CRAIG A.
ALTMAN

Let's explore this scenario: Say you had a workplace injury and your doctor provides you with a note listing your work restrictions. There's a chance your employer might offer light-duty work.

But what does that mean? [What is light-duty?](#)

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I think many people aren't even aware light-duty work restrictions even exist. It's important to be informed!”

Craig Altman, Esq.

Light or Modified Duty work means that your employer will place you in a less physically demanding job until you are healed. Alternatively, your employer offers you the option of your current position with reasonable accommodations to fit within the restrictions set forth by your doctor.

However, some employers push their employees beyond the restrictions set forth by the doctor. It is crucial to

inform your doctor and make an incident report with your employer. You want to do everything you can to protect yourself. One pitfall that a lot of injured workers get trapped in is pushing themselves to get back to regular duty too fast and sustaining further injury. If you feel as though the company doctor is only looking out for the company's best interest, ask to be seen by another doctor on a list of suggestions. If there is no panel list, choose a doctor who specializes in the type of on-the-job injury you sustained. When and if you have questions, contact a workers' comp injury lawyer for legal advice, like the Law Offices of Craig Altman, who will happily answer any questions you may have.

Light Duties Defined

When used regarding [workers' compensation](#) law, the term 'light duty' has many meanings. The most common definition of light-duty refers to work that is physically or mentally less demanding than regular job duties on a temporary or permanent basis.

Sometimes organizations refer to the term 'light duty' when an employee is exempt from performing job functions that they are unable to perform because of a disability. 'Light-duty' may also consist of particular positions that are less physically straining or mentally demanding, that were positions created explicitly to provide alternative work for injured employees who, often have a physical or mental disability, or are unable to perform some or all routine duties.

The term 'light duties' is most often associated with the workers' compensation law, and thus the first definition is the most frequent use of the term light duties.

Light Duty Examples

Light duty, as defined above, is a modified version of your old job or a completely different role, all based on the idea that it is physically or mentally less demanding than your regular job duties based on your disability or your work injury. The light-duty jobs may consist of doing less physical labor, working slower, or working shorter hours, etc. Here are a few examples of light-duty work:

- Taking inventories
- Performing office tasks
- Working a desk job
- Supervising and reporting on job sites
- Monitoring surveillance cameras
- Performing machinery/equipment maintenance

Things To Remember When Taking Light Or Modified Duty Into Consideration

Your light duty work can affect your workers' compensation benefits that you are receiving. A few different scenarios that can occur will change the amount and the benefits that you receive.

If you were to take light duty work and:

- You earn the same amount of money or more than what you made before your injury, your payments for lost wages will not continue
- You earn less money than you did before work-related injuries occurred, you will receive lost wage payments in the form of partial disability benefits

Furthermore, you do not have to accept light duty work that exceeds the medical restrictions set by your doctor. If you so choose not to take a light-duty job that accommodates your medical leave restrictions, the employer can request a workers' compensation judge to terminate or modify the benefits you receive. If your employer does not offer a light-duty job, you will continue to receive your workers' compensation benefits.

Act Promptly When Offered Light Duty Work

When offered employment as light duty or modified duty, injured workers ought to act promptly. If an employee is expected to on a given date, refusing to do so could endanger the employee's workers compensation benefits and workers comp case. Those receiving workers' compensation benefits are free to request an extension of the starting date or time, but if it is not granted, they had better have an excellent reason for failing to show at work. If it is granted and the employee still does not show up for work on time, the employer has the legal right to withdraw the offer, and the workers' compensation benefits may be modified or terminated outright, or if you are concerned about the outcome of accepting light-duty work or have any questions on modified duty and its implications.

Contacting a reputable New Jersey workers' compensation attorney, like the Law Offices of Craig Altman will allow you to get the help and answers you need. Contact our law firm today at (856) 327-8899 for more information.

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Craig A. Altman

The Law Offices of Craig A. Altman

+1 215-569-4488

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