

# Return to Work & Workplace Accommodations

**Leader's role:** Support a safe, timely, and respectful return; coordinate operational details; follow only approved restrictions and accommodations; and promptly involve The Standard or Salem Health Leaves Team when the employee's status or needs change.

## Purpose and Guiding Principles for Leaders

This guide helps leaders understand their responsibilities when an employee returns from leave, returns with restrictions, or requests a workplace accommodation. Each situation requires an individualized review. The Standard administers Salem Health's leave and accommodation processes, while leaders provide job and operational information and implement approved plans.

- Do not diagnose, evaluate medical evidence, or promise that a leave, disability claim, restriction, or accommodation will be approved.
- Do not require an employee to be "100% healed" or free of all restrictions before considering a return to work.
- Keep medical information confidential. Focus leader conversations on work status, functional limitations, essential job functions, schedule, and implementation needs.
- Do not permit work outside documented restrictions or before the return-to-work or accommodation plan has been coordinated.
- Apply normal performance, conduct, attendance, and call-in expectations, subject to approved leave and accommodations.

## Roles and Responsibilities for Leaders

| Party                                     | Primary responsibilities                                                                                                                                                                 | Key boundary                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Leader / manager</b>                   | Maintain communication; provide essential-function and operational information; coordinate first-day logistics; implement the approved plan; observe effectiveness and escalate changes. | Do not request a diagnosis or make benefit eligibility decisions.                         |
| <b>Employee</b>                           | Notify The Standard and leader of the anticipated return date or changes; provide requested documentation; participate in the interactive process; follow the approved plan.             | Must not work outside documented restrictions or assume an extension is automatic.        |
| <b>The Standard</b>                       | Administer leave and applicable disability claims; collect return-to-work information; facilitate the accommodation interactive process on Salem Health's behalf.                        | Disability benefit review and accommodation review are separate processes.                |
| <b>Salem Health Leave of Absence Team</b> | Provide internal guidance through AskHR and partner on complex or unresolved return-to-work issues.                                                                                      | Leaders should escalate questions rather than interpret plan terms or legal requirements. |

# Leader Workflow

## 1. Before the anticipated return

1. Acknowledge the employee's anticipated return date and direct the employee to notify The Standard if that has not already occurred.
2. Send employee the Employee Responsibilities and Next Steps to Return to Work outlined in Scenario 8 in the [Leader Leave of Absence Standard Work](#).
3. Confirm the employee's first scheduled shift, reporting location, schedule, badge/building access, system access, and department-specific onboarding needs.
4. Ask only work-related questions needed to plan the return. Do not ask for a diagnosis or retain medical documentation; do direct medical documents to The Standard.
5. If the employee reports restrictions, reduced hours, additional leave needs, or a workplace adjustment, promptly connect the employee with The Standard's ADA team at [salemhealthadawpp@standard.com](mailto:salemhealthadawpp@standard.com)
6. Review the essential functions of the position and be ready to describe patient-care, safety, scheduling, staffing, and operational requirements.
7. Reach out to Salem Health Leaves Team through AskHR if you need additional support.

**Stop point:** If restrictions are identified and no coordinated plan is in place, do not schedule or direct the employee to perform work outside those restrictions. Seek guidance before the employee begins work.

## 2. During an accommodation or restriction review

- Participate promptly in discussions with the Standard ADA Accommodation Specialist and provide accurate information about essential job functions and operational impact.
- Consider effective alternatives in good faith. The accommodation provided may differ from the employee's preferred option **if another effective accommodation is available**.
- Do not tell the employee that light duty, remote work, a schedule change, reassignment, or extended leave is guaranteed or not an option at all. Temporary modifications are evaluated individually.
- Maintain confidentiality. Share implementation information only with people who need it to carry out the approved plan.
- Document operational facts and implementation questions, not assumptions about the employee's medical condition.

## 3. On or shortly before the first day back

- Confirm that the return date and any restrictions or approved accommodations are understood and operationally ready.
- Hold a focused return-to-work conversation covering schedule, work location, access, relevant team or organizational updates, transition priorities, and follow-up expectations.
- Explain only the information coworkers need to perform their work. Do not disclose the employee's medical information or the reason for an accommodation.
- If the employee arrives with new or different restrictions, pause affected work and contact The Standard for direction.

## 4. After the employee returns

- Implement the approved plan consistently and ensure the employee works within documented restrictions.

- Monitor whether the plan is effective without seeking medical details. Address performance or conduct concerns through normal processes, accounting for approved leave or accommodations.
- Promptly report material changes: a new restriction, release to full duty, missed return date, accommodation that is not working, safety concern, or request for another adjustment.
- Participate in scheduled reassessments and follow-up conversations. Temporary or phased-return arrangements should have clear start dates, duration, schedule, duties, and review points.

## Quick Escalation Guide

| Situation                                                      | Leader action                                                                         | Contact / route                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Return date is known or changes</b>                         | Coordinate logistics and remind the employee to notify The Standard.                  | The Standard; leader                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Return-to-work medical documentation</b>                    | Do not retain or interpret it; direct it to The Standard.                             | <a href="mailto:absence@standard.com">absence@standard.com</a> and <a href="mailto:SalemHealthADAWPP@standard.com">SalemHealthADAWPP@standard.com</a> |
| <b>Restriction, accommodation, or additional leave request</b> | Do not promise an outcome; begin or continue the interactive review.                  | <a href="mailto:SalemHealthADAWPP@standard.com">SalemHealthADAWPP@standard.com</a> ; AskHR                                                            |
| <b>Condition may prevent work beyond 90 calendar days</b>      | Remind the employee that LTD may require a separate claim and timely action.          | The Standard Claim Intake: 1-800-378-2395, as applicable                                                                                              |
| <b>Urgent safety or patient-care concern</b>                   | Pause affected work, keep the employee within restrictions, and escalate immediately. | Salem Health Leaves Team via AskHR and appropriate operational leadership                                                                             |

## Frequently asked questions

**Q: Can I ask the employee what diagnosis caused the leave?**

**A:** No. Focus on the anticipated return date, work status, functional limitations, essential job functions, and what is needed to implement an approved plan. Medical documentation should be submitted to The Standard.

**Q: Does an employee have to be fully healed or restriction-free before returning?**

**A:** No. Salem Health does not require an employee to be “100% healed” or completely free of restrictions to be considered for return. Restrictions may trigger an individualized accommodation review.

**Q: Can an employee return to work if they verbally confirm they have been released to full duty but do not have a return-to-work note?**

**A:** Yes. A return-to-work note is not required for an employee to resume work if they are released to full duty. If the employee confirms they have been released to full duty, you may allow them to return to work. Remind the employee to notify The Standard of their return-to-work date.

**Q: Can I let the employee try working while restrictions are still being reviewed?**

**A:** Do not direct or permit work outside documented restrictions. If restrictions are identified and the plan is not yet coordinated, contact The Standard or Salem Health Leaves Team before affected work begins.

**Q: Can I promise light duty, a reduced schedule, remote work, or another adjustment?**

**A:** No. You may discuss operational facts and possible options, but accommodations and temporary job modifications are not guaranteed. They are reviewed individually based on functional limitations, essential job functions, effectiveness, safety, and operational impact.

**Q: What if the employee’s return date changes or additional leave may be needed?**

**A:** Ask the employee to promptly notify The Standard and the leader. Additional leave or an extension is not automatic and may require updated information or medical documentation. Escalate the request; do not independently approve or deny it.

**Q: What if the employee returns to work and hands me the note that lists restrictions/limitations?**

**A:** If you can approve the accommodations as listed, the employee may return to work immediately. The leader will then send the note to The Standard [SalemHealthADAWPP@standard.com](mailto:SalemHealthADAWPP@standard.com) and include that you approve of the accommodations as listed.

**A:** If you can’t approve the accommodations as listed, send the employee home, and inform the employee to send the note to The Standard [SalemHealthADAWPP@standard.com](mailto:SalemHealthADAWPP@standard.com) for processing and to initiate the interactive process.

**Q: If an employee has an approved voluntary Short-Term Disability (STD) claim, when does the Long Term Disability (LTD) process begin?**

**A:** The Standard will notify the employee when it is time to begin the transition to an LTD claim and will provide instructions. The employee should respond promptly to requests from The Standard to avoid delays in the LTD claim review.

**Q: What if the employee does not have an approved voluntary STD claim?**

**A:** An LTD claim will not be initiated automatically. If the medical condition is expected to prevent the employee from working beyond the LTD waiting period of **90 calendar days**, the employee should contact The Standard's Claim Intake Service Center at **1-800-378-2395** to initiate an LTD claim. Filing a claim does not guarantee approval of LTD benefits.

**Q: Does approval or denial of STD or LTD decide whether a workplace accommodation or additional leave will be approved?**

**A:** No. The accommodation review is separate from the STD and LTD claim processes. Eligibility for or approval of disability benefits does not determine the accommodation decision, and the accommodation decision does not determine eligibility for disability benefits. To request an accommodation or extension of leave, the employee should contact [SalemHealthADAWPP@standard.com](mailto:SalemHealthADAWPP@standard.com). The employee may be asked for medical information describing work-related limitations and the accommodation or leave needed.

**Q: If an employee submits a leave request through The Standard, does that automatically start a Paid Leave Oregon (PLO) claim?**

**A:** No. The Standard administers the leave of absence and any applicable disability benefits. Paid Leave Oregon is a separate state-administered program with its own application process. The employee must apply directly through Paid Leave Oregon. A leave request with The Standard supports leave administration but does not replace the State of Oregon's application requirements. Employees should use the Paid Leave Oregon website or contact Paid Leave Oregon directly for eligibility, benefits, and application information.

**Q: What if an employee arrives ready to work but says the provider changed the restrictions?**

**A:** Do not place the employee in work that may conflict with the new restrictions. Ask the employee to provide updated information to The Standard, and contact Salem Health Leaves Team through AskHR for coordination.

**Q: What may I tell the team about the employee's absence or accommodation?**

**A:** Share only what coworkers need for work planning, such as schedule, assignments, or coverage. Do not disclose medical information, a diagnosis, or details of the accommodation review.

**Q: Who should the employee or leader contact?**

**A:** Return-to-work documents: [absence@standard.com](mailto:absence@standard.com). Accommodation documents, additional leave, or accommodation requests: [SalemHealthADAWPP@standard.com](mailto:SalemHealthADAWPP@standard.com). Salem Health Leaves Team : **AskHR**. Employee Assistance Program: Modern Health.

## Leader conversation checklist

- ☐ Confirm the anticipated return date and first scheduled shift.
- ☐ Confirm reporting location, schedule, access, and essential transition updates.
- ☐ Ask whether The Standard has been notified; do not ask for a diagnosis.
- ☐ Verify that any approved restrictions or accommodations are ready to implement.
- ☐ Explain performance, attendance, safety, and follow-up expectations subject to the approved plan.
- ☐ Identify the next check-in and the route for reporting changes.

**Important:** This guide is a leader resource and does not replace plan documents, applicable law, or case-specific direction from The Standard or Salem Health Leaves Team. When facts are unclear or change, pause assumptions and escalate through AskHR.

