



# Frequently Asked Questions about Job Modifications

## What is a job modification?

A job modification is an adjustment or alteration to the way a job is performed. The modification may be temporary during recovery or permanent.

Employers can make job modifications independently of the Department of Labor & Industries (L&I). Some workers may be eligible for an L&I benefit assisting with a job modification.

## Why should a job be modified?

Modifying a job helps an injured worker return to work more quickly. It typically decreases time-loss and long-term disability.

## Can you give me some examples of job modifications?

A worker developed carpal tunnel syndrome as a result of frequently gripping small pliers during mechanical work. His restrictions include reducing the amount of force he uses to grasp tools. Using pliers designed with larger and longer handles will reduce the force.

A worker with a back injury who has lifting restrictions has to manually lift boxes off of a conveyor onto a pallet. The worker may benefit from a mechanical lifting device.

Manual lift



Mechanical lift



## When does L&I offer financial assistance with job modifications?

For eligible workers, L&I will provide financial assistance with job modifications. For these workers, L&I may pay for a consultation and special equipment or tools so that the worker can return to their job or a new job.

## Who is eligible for the L&I benefit?

A worker may be eligible for the L&I benefit if:

- The worker has an open and allowed claim, and
- The worker is off work or was taken off work in the past, and
- The attending health-care provider placed restrictions on the worker that prevent them from doing their regular or new job.

## What is the process for requesting the L&I benefit?

Contact the claim manager to request a consultation on the job modification. Any existing work restrictions must be identified at the time of the request.

A number of involved parties may request a job modification consultation: the attending health-care provider, employer, consulting health-care or vocational service provider, claim manager, third-party administrator or the worker.

## Who decides what type of modification L&I will pay for?

If the request for a consultation is approved, a consultant will work with the worker, employer, and attending health-care provider as needed to identify an appropriate job modification.

## Who is the consultant for job modifications?

Typically, the job modification consultant is a physical or occupational therapist, a vocational service provider, an ergonomic consultant, or a member of the employer's staff. *Vendors who supply equipment for the modification may not provide the consultation without prior approval from the claim manager.*

## How does L&I pay for job modifications?

For eligible workers, L&I pays up to \$5,000 per claim per job site. The benefit is paid out of the Second-Injury Fund. Use of the job modification benefit does not directly affect the employer's industrial insurance (workers' compensation) premiums.

Self-insured employers may request reimbursement for equipment and tools from L&I's Self-Insurance section.

## Who owns equipment purchased by L&I as part of a job modification?

Either the employer or the worker may own the equipment or tools L&I purchases as part of a job modification. Both parties must sign an agreement specifying ownership. Typically the employer will own non-portable items and items that are bolted to the work site.

## How can I get more information about L&I's job modification benefit?

- Visit L&I's Web site at [www.Lni.wa.gov/ClaimsIns/Providers/Vocational/Tools/PreJob/default.asp](http://www.Lni.wa.gov/ClaimsIns/Providers/Vocational/Tools/PreJob/default.asp)
- Call the assigned claim manager, or
- Call the L&I office nearest you and ask to talk with the Regional Supervisor.

## L&I Regional Offices

### Northwest Washington (Region 1)

Bellingham	360-647-7300
Everett	425-290-1300
Mount Vernon	360-416-3000

### King County (Region 2)

Bellevue	425-990-1400
Seattle	206-515-2800
Tukwila	206-835-1000

### Pierce County/Peninsula (Region 3)

Bremerton	360-415-4000
Port Angeles	360-417-2700
Tacoma	253-596-3800

### Southwest Washington (Region 4)

Aberdeen	360-533-8200
Longview	360-575-6900
Tumwater	360-902-5799
Vancouver	360-896-2300

### Central Washington (Region 5)

E. Wenatchee	509-886-6500
Kennewick	509-735-0100
Moses Lake	509-764-6900
Yakima	509-454-3700

### Eastern Washington (Region 6)

Colville	509-684-7417
Pullman	509-334-5296
Spokane	509-324-2600

 **On the Web:** Visit the L&I Web site at [www.Lni.wa.gov](http://www.Lni.wa.gov)

Other formats for persons with disabilities are available on request. Call 1-800-547-8367. TDD users, call 360-902-5797. L&I is an equal opportunity employer.