

PREFERRED WORKER Adviser

Winter 2005

Where should I use my PW benefits?

With the Preferred Worker Program, you have options! The program is “worker option, worker activated.” This means you have choices as to where, when, and if you use the program.

For example, consider offering the incentives to **your employer-at-injury** (your employer at the time you were injured). Although sometimes it doesn't look as if there is any chance of returning to work with injury-caused limitations, you may feel invested in your company and want to keep working there. Worksite modification has been used in many cases to help injured workers go back to work with their

employer-at-injury, in either a new job or their regular job. Premium exemption, claim cost reimbursement, and wage subsidy are just as likely to be attractive to your employer-at-injury as any other employer. So if you want to go back to work with your employer-at-injury, make it known and remember you can offer incentives.

You can use your Preferred Worker benefits with **any Oregon employer** who maintains Oregon workers' compensation coverage and follows workers' compensation laws. You may want to use the program to get started in a new occupation. It's your option.

Continued on Page 4

Employers using Job Match

Listed below are the names and geographical locations of employers that have posted jobs on Job Match within the last two to three months.

Grant Merchandise	All locations
Plastic Metals Technologies.....	Portland/Metro
ABC Kids Daycare	Portland/Metro
Hamlet Quick Stop	Coastal
Town & Country Cleaners.....	Southern Oregon
Pacific Coast Truck and Trailer	Portland Metro
Mollie's Bakery	Willamette Valley
Tru Green Chemlawn.....	Southern Oregon
Productive Builders LLC.....	Southern Oregon
Department of Consumer and Business Services.....	Willamette Valley
Pacific Northwest Transmission	Willamette Valley
Emerald Laundromat	Willamette Valley
Astoria Downtown Market.....	Coastal
Reed Plastering and Stucco Inc.....	Portland/Metro

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Register for our new e-mail service

If you are looking for employment, we have a new system that allows you to register by location to receive job postings. When an employer posts a job on the Preferred Worker Program Job Match site in the geographical location for which you are registered, an e-mail will be sent to you with a link to the job posting. For more information, call (800) 445-3948 or (503) 947-7588.



New direct link

To get to the Preferred Worker Program or the Job Match site online more quickly, use our new direct link, www.Oregonpwp.info.

Questions and Answers

Q I have a friend who has had his own business in Oregon for a long time. He has never had employees. Can he hire me and use Preferred Worker Program benefits?

A Before your friend is eligible to use Preferred Worker Program incentives, he must first get a workers' compensation policy. If you are the only employee, he can get coverage for about \$200 a year until your eligibility expires. We can send him information on how to do it. Remember, you can't use your incentives to go back to the same kind of work you were doing when you were injured.

Q Who decides whether a worksite modification becomes my property or the employer's property?

A The Preferred Worker Program consultant assigned to your modification makes the final decision. The consultant will discuss property ownership with you and your employer before approving the agreement. Usually, items that are attached to the employer's property or equipment become the employer's. Customized items like ergonomic chairs and special hand tools usually become the worker's. There are many questions for the consultant to

consider with the worker and the employer in order to make the best ownership decision.

Q I have a Preferred Worker Identification Card; however, the end date on the card has passed. Can I get this card renewed?

A Unfortunately, no. The Preferred Worker Identification Card is good for three years from the date the card was issued. The Preferred Worker has this three-year period in which to activate premium exemption. Once the card is activated, the Preferred Worker will receive a Preferred Worker Eligibility Card that indicates that the premium exemption is active. If the Preferred Worker Identification Card is not activated, it expires. The only way to receive another Preferred Worker Identification Card is to have a new Oregon accepted injury, re-open a claim for aggravation, or file a vocational assistance claim.

Q I just want to use the Preferred Worker Program to get the clothes I need for my new job. Do I have to give the employer my ID card that will activate premium exemption?

A Yes. To use the Preferred Worker benefits, you and your employer must fill out your ID card and send it to us within 90 days of

the date you started your job (or 90 days from the card's issue date, if you got the card after you started work). The only exception is the worksite modification benefit. See the next question.

Q I started a job more than 90 days ago and didn't mention the program to my employer. The more I do the job, the more trouble I'm having because of my injury-caused lifting limitations. Can I still have a worksite modification?

A Yes. The need for a worksite modification isn't always known within the first 90 days of employment. So the worksite modification benefit may be used without sending in the ID card and activating premium exemption.

Q I see in your brochure that I have \$2,000 to use for tools and equipment. Can I just keep buying tools until I use up all the money in my account?

A No. You don't have an "account." There's up to \$2,000 available for tools and equipment required for a job and not normally provided by the employer. This doesn't mean you're entitled to \$2,000 worth of tools and equipment. The program will pay for what's required to a maximum of \$2,000. ■

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John Shilts

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Meet Tony Guidone



Tony Guidone

tants and specialists in the Preferred Worker Program (PWP). Tony enters data contract agreements and pro-

Tony is a reimbursement technician with the Re-employment Assistance Unit (RAU) in Salem. He provides support to the re-employment consul-

cesses injured workers' wage-subsidy reimbursements, obtained employment purchases, and worksite modification reimbursements.

Recently retired from the navy, Tony was stationed aboard ships and spent time in Spain and Scotland. His last duty was aboard the USS SHOUP DDG86 out of Everett, Washington. However, Tony has been with the Preferred Worker Program for almost a year now, and he really enjoys the work.

Tony and his wife live in Dallas with their two children and are active in school sports programs. Tony enjoys family camping, woodworking, and golfing.

Tony credits his easy transition from the military to working for the state to his co-workers and the committed folks in PWP. This has made it easy for Tony to gain experience in PWP and has helped him enjoy his job. ■

Tony's e-mail address is anthony.a.guidone@state.or.us.

Preferred Worker Program Success Story

By Dan Gammon

Eladia, a 51-year-old janitor for a small Eastern Oregon high school injured her left shoulder. She has permanent restrictions in lifting, reaching, and repetitive use of her left shoulder. Although Eladia returned to work and her employer accommodated her restrictions while she was recovering, Eladia was no longer able to perform some of her regular duties, including the following:

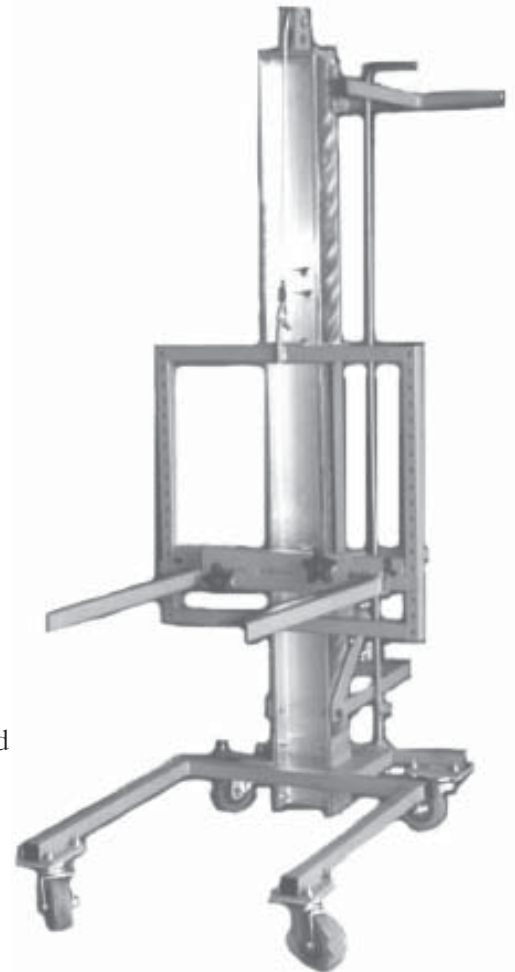
- Carrying and lifting several trash bags over her shoulder when placing them in a dumpster
- Lifting and moving student desks
- Mopping floors using a traditional mop
- Dusting ledges and light fixtures above shoulder level

All these tasks required lifting or repetitively using her injured left shoulder beyond her physical capacities.

The employer contacted the Preferred Worker Program, requesting worksite modification assistance, and a consultant met with Eladia and her employer to assess her

worksite. After reviewing the problems, the consultant, the employer, and Eladia agreed on solutions: the purchase of a small, powered floor scrubber to eliminate the repetitive motions of mopping three hours a shift; a modified lift cart equipped with forks to lift and move student desks for cleaning classrooms; an electric-powered mobile dumping platform equipped with a plastic tote bin to eliminate manual trash hauling and dumping; and pole extensions to eliminate overhead reaching during dusting.

Once the equipment was installed, Eladia resumed her regular duties on a full-time basis. Eladia was happy to resume working with her employer in the small community where she and her family have lived for many years. ■



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Where should I use my Preferred Worker benefits? . . . *Continued from Page 1*

What if you've already returned to work without using the program? That doesn't have to be the end of the story. You might consider using the program's incentives **to help you get a promotion or a different job** at the company where you work.

And don't forget you can use all or part of the incentives for a **temporary job**. If your Preferred Worker Identification Card was issued close to three years ago, it will expire

soon, and you will lose eligibility. One way to preserve your eligibility, even if you haven't landed your "dream job," is to use the program with a temporary job, which will give you eligibility for the next three years.

Remember you aren't limited to using the program with just one employer. If you've used it and aren't sure what you can still offer to another employer, please call us, and we'll help you figure it out. ■

