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Comments or suggestions, call Bethany Crile, newsletter editor, at (515) 244-7282 or email bethanycrile@iowaleague.org.



The Informer

A monthly newsletter addressing workplace safety by Iowa Municipalities Workers' Compensation Association .

Lee County motor grader testimony

By Benjamin Hull P.E. | Assistant Lee County Engineer

Secondary roads employees are exposed to many hazards while performing their duties. Safety training must cover a broad spectrum-- alternately focusing on handling hazardous chemicals, safe operation of heavy equipment, and navigating underground utilities -- to name a few.

Perhaps the greatest hazard faced by Lee County employees is the necessity of performing their jobs on roadways amongst the traveling public. The motorists we serve are too often inattentive and likely not alert to the reality they are speeding through our place of work.

A recent incident brings renewed focus to this danger, which is a daily reality for roads employees. Fortunately, it is a story about how much worse things could have been. Cleanliness, good housekeeping and vigilance in wearing a seatbelt may seem too mundane to receive great focus during routine safety meetings. In this instance, it is likely these behaviors mitigated an incident with a potentially catastrophic outcome.

On a recent afternoon, an employee had finished blading some gravel roads and was returning to the shop in his motor grader. With his blade rotated

beneath the machine and travelling down the road in high gear, the operator glanced in his rearview mirror. This quick glance revealed the tractor-trailer was bearing down on him, and the inevitable collision was about to occur.

Despite a half-mile of clear visibility and the beacon on the motor grader flashing several feet above the ground, skid marks indicated the brakes were applied by the semi driver just 45 feet before impact. Evidence also showed that the two vehicles travelled together for just 12 feet before the rear tires of the motor grader were lifted off the ground. The vehicles travelled as one into the road ditch, resting with the motor grader on its side and the tractor-trailer, still

upright, lodged into its belly. With the cab of the machine resting on the ground and its door inoperable, the operator resorted to breaking the remaining glass to exit the overturned vehicle.

Examination of the machine revealed the force with which it had been struck. The motor

grader was left with two blown out tires, the cab noticeably compressed downward on one side, and the massive circular gear between the frame and mowboard bent considerably. Four of the six half-inch bolts securing the transmission cover had been shorn off. The door was

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pushed one inch past the cab - evidence of deformation of the large steel beam frame.

An expensive machine was lost on this day, and Lee County resources had to be deployed in order to clean up the aftermath of this accident. Lost time away from work was recorded. Insurance is carried for just these costs. What could never be replaced is a co-worker, a skilled employee and a family's loved one.

Through what seems to be good fortune, the employee received only minor injuries. It is striking how in an accident beyond his control, he had such a role in creating his own good fortune.

All those who responded to this accident have remarked on two things. One, how critical it was that the employee remained in the cab of the motor grader beneath its protective rollover structure. Second, how fortunate he was not to be struck by flying debris inside the cab. If not for the proper seatbelt usage, he certainly would have fared worse. The employee is known to keep



photos provided by Lee County

the cab of his machine free of unneeded objects, with heavy items such as a fire extinguisher secured. Imagine what may have happened if that heavy extinguisher had been propelled about the cab.

These often unheralded habits of responsible employees should always be remembered as important, potentially even helping to improve the outcome of events beyond their own control.

Safely Speaking

We're looking for a few good members!

IMWCA has a long history of member involvement, and this shows up in the success our members have realized in getting everyone home safe at the end of the day. Part of this success can be attributed to the Loss Control Advisory Committee, a group of members who provide guidance to loss control staff and the IMWCA Board of Trustees.

Last year this committee experienced significant change; several members retired, one joined the IMWCA staff, and another resigned due to work commitments. Staff took this as an opportunity to step back and reassess the purpose, direction and scope of the committee, and now we are ready to raise the bar and start fresh.

We are looking for members to represent specific dis-

ciplines on the committee including: administrative/human resources; fire and emergency medical services; law enforcement; municipal utilities including water/wastewater and electric; public works including streets, roads and parks; solid waste; transit; public health/nursing; and an independent agent. We anticipate one annual meeting with subsequent meetings, conference calls and emails depending on the project involved. Currently staff is actively recruiting member employees with expertise in the above areas to help shape the future of IMWCA loss control.

To learn more or to let us know you want to be part of this committee, send an email to losscontrol@iowaleague.org or contact your loss control representative.

wanted

Calendar photos due September 7

IMWCA wants to feature your entity in our 2016 calendar. Have a new park, monument, welcome sign, or interesting feature in your community? Send us a photo!

Please submit your photo online at <http://leagueeditor/Pages/FileBox.aspx>, and include your email address, member

entity name and the word "calendar" in your message.

Only high-resolution images can be used in the calendar. The deadline for submitting photos is September 7.

Questions may be directed to bethanycrile@iowaleague.org. We can't wait to see your photos!



Bee and wasp stings



The summer months are when bees and wasps are the most active. In most cases the bees and wasps are happy to leave us alone as long as we leave them alone. However, occasionally the interaction between bees, wasps and humans can be unpleasant and results in stings. To minimize a painful, and in some extreme cases, a life threatening encounter here are some key tips from MedicineNet.com:

- Most simple insect stings in a non-allergic person require no more than first aid at home.
- Avoid further stings by wearing protective clothing, using insect repellent and avoiding infested areas.
- Remove any stingers remaining in the skin (most likely from bees) immediately. Some experts recommend scraping out the stinger with a credit card. However, it is probably more important to get the stinger out as quickly as possible than to be overly concerned about how it is removed.
- Application of ice to the sting site may provide some mild relief. Ice may be applied for 20 minutes once

every hour as needed. Cloth should be placed between the ice and skin to avoid freezing the skin.

- Consider taking an antihistamine such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl) for itching.
- Consider taking ibuprofen or acetaminophen (Tylenol) for pain relief as needed.
- Wash the sting site with soap and water. Place an antibiotic ointment on the sting site.
- If it has been more than 10 years since your last tetanus booster immunization, get a booster within the next few days.
- If you have been stung by a bee or wasp and have previously had a serious allergic reaction, seek medical attention. Consider taking an antihistamine such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl) as soon as possible. If any allergic symptoms develop, consider using the epinephrine part of an emergency allergy kit (EpiPen) if previously prescribed by a doctor.

Welcome, new members!

The following members have joined IMWCA:

Madison County
Muscatine
Pleasantville Emergency Services
Dept.
Union County

Coming, October 14

Save the date for IMWCA's annual safety workshop, the One Day Safety University. This year's event will be held Wednesday, Oct. 14 at Ankeny Fire Station #1, 410 W. 1st Street.

A full agenda and registration will be available later. Check www.imwca.org, this newsletter and our LinkedIn page for updates.



IMWCA Informer is a monthly newsletter published by the Iowa Municipalities Workers' Compensation Association (IMWCA) in cooperation with the Iowa League of Cities.

This newsletter is designed to educate local officials on workers' compensation issues. Suggestions for articles or topics to appear in IMWCA Informer are always welcome. Contact IMWCA at (515) 244-7282. You may also view this publication online at www.imwca.org.

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