

JANUARY
2014

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ONLINE UNIVERSITY COURSE HIGHLIGHT

**Transitional Duty:
Improving Your Return to
Work Program**

Learn more online
www.imwca.org

■ IOWA MUNICIPALITIES WORKERS' COMPENSATION ASSOCIATION

IMWCA

Comments or suggestions, call
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the Informer

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

Safety committee goals

What do you want your safety committee to accomplish in 2014?

A common thread among productive safety committees is that they can answer that question. They have set goals for the committee that will serve as their road map for 2014.

Why set goals? We set goals to develop a focused effort on a finite list of objectives that can be realistically accomplished during the year. Committees who list tasks and desired outcomes only to find the list overly daunting given the committee's resources may become intimidated by the scope of the task and delay starting altogether. As the old saying goes, "the best way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time." Goals not only break tasks into manageable bites but also help prioritize where to start.

How do we prioritize goals? Each member is different due to different exposures and differences in experience. A new committee might need to start with the basics of developing and implementing incident review procedures or written safety operating procedures. A practical way to prioritize is to survey the employees for their input on what they feel needs to be addressed first. Other ideas may include developing a safety manual or developing procedures for the more dangerous tasks such as confined space entry or excavation.

Conversely, members with an established safety culture might have fewer

goals based on maintenance of existing programs.

What is a reasonable number of goals? This also depends on the experience of the entity. The more experienced entity might only have two or three very specific goals. New or reorganizing committees should have no more than five goals. Among those goals should be one or two that is highly attainable. This gives the committee some victories and still leaves plenty of challenge.

Some examples of basic goals include:

- Developing or updating a safety manual.
- Developing or updating an operating procedure like lockout/tagout or blood borne pathogens procedures.
- Meeting 11 of the 12 months with 95 percent attendance by members.
- Overseeing completion of annual training for all departments.
- Performing quarterly self-audits.

By identifying a reasonable number of achievable goals for 2014, your committee has a better chance of success. Along with success comes credibility for the safety process and added support from management and staff.

If you have questions regarding goal setting within your committee, please contact your IMWCA loss control representative. We look forward to helping your committee have a productive and safe 2014.



CLAIMS CORNER:

Matt Jackson, Claims Manager

A look back

As we look back at the overall claim counts and the 20 costliest claims of the last fiscal year, we noted some interesting facts.

Last fiscal year we received 1,886 claims. This is an increase of 166 claims compared to the previous fiscal year. Of the total claims, 589 were incident-only that were called in for report only. Medical-only claims totaled 1,116 and 181 of the claims were indemnity files where lost time and/or permanency benefits were paid along with the medical expenses.

Slip, trip and falls continue to dominate the cause of our injuries. This is followed closely by lacerations and sprain/strain type injuries. When we look at the most injured body parts, thumb/finger injuries continue to lead the way. These are followed by wrist/hand injuries and knee injuries. Low back and shoulder injuries round out the top five most injured body parts.

The total incurred (estimated) cost for the 1,886 claims is \$7.2 million. The average per claim cost is approximately \$3,800. While our total incurred cost went up from the previous fiscal year, our average per claim cost went down about \$300.

The top 20 costliest claims, which account for just more than 1 percent of the total claim count, accounted for 43 percent of the total incurred (estimated) costs at about \$3.1 million. The top 20 costliest claims ranged in total incurred (estimated) cost from \$78,638 to \$568,114.

Six of our top 20 costliest claims involved slip and fall injuries; three were motor vehicle accidents. The remainder involved some type of sprain/strain injury, usually from lifting. Thankfully, we did not have any fatalities for the last fiscal year. The majority of our top 20 claims involved secondary road employees followed by law enforcement/firefighters and then mechanics.

Please continue to keep up the good work, and use your tools to reduce the frequency and severity of your workers' compensation claims. These tools include, but are not limited to: having a solid return to work program; a good relationship with your designated physician; incident investigations; and a 24-hour claim reporting policy.

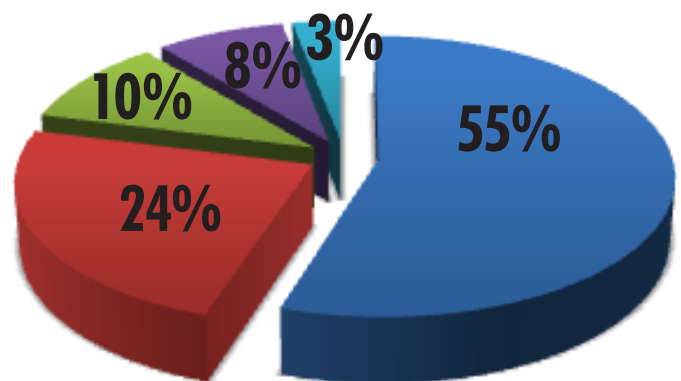
Online University

IMWCA continues to invest in our members by providing safety and health training so everyone goes home safe at the end of their day. For the first half of 2014 we will add the following new courses to our Online University:

- January - Transitional Duty-Improving Your Return to Work Program
- February - OSHA Investigation/Inspection
- March - Flagger Safety
- April - Slower is Faster: Survival Skills for Law Enforcement Drivers
- May - Lead Safety Awareness
- June - Workplace Violence

Annual Financial Report available at www.imwca.org

Causes of slips, trips & falls



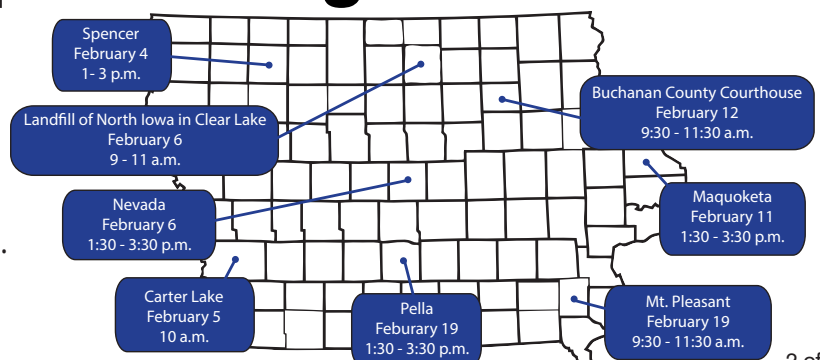
- Walking Surfaces
- Footwear
- Hazard Warning
- Training
- Fraud

Source: National Floor Safety Institute

Regional Workshops coming next month

The dates, locations and topics are set for the 2014 Regional Workshops.

In a departure from previous years where staff covered a couple topics in detail in the two hour workshop, this year's event will feature six, 15-minute lightening sessions on topics like: office ergonomics, dealing with an aging workforce and job descriptions. The final session will be an open forum where attendees can raise issues for open discussion.



Loss control spotlight

IMWCA has a long history of providing stable, affordable workers' compensation for cities, counties and governmental entities in Iowa. Since its creation in 1981, our priority has not only been to help members keep workers' compensation costs manageable, but we also strive to help ensure employees go home safe at the end of each work day. Three important, dedicated team members lead the way with one, common goal in mind – "everyone goes home safe".



During the early 1980's, when IMWCA first began working with cities, members relied on each other to have good risk management programs and attitudes in place. The effort was formalized in 1988, with the addition of Storm Lake native Dean Schade. Schade was the first member of the Loss Control Department,

helping members implement safety programs, procedures and a safety culture. Now a Senior Loss Control Representative, Schade continues the mission: keep our members' employees safe at work, so they get home safe at the end of each day. He has several professional designations, including a Masters of Public Administration (MPA) and Associate in Risk Management (ARM). Schade will soon celebrate 25 years with the IMWCA and Iowa League of Cities.



Originally from Ottumwa, Ed Morrison joined the team more than seven years ago. For 17 years Morrison worked in law enforcement, including time as an Air Force security police officer with extensive law enforcement training. After leaving law enforcement he worked for Warren

County as a heavy equipment operator in the secondary roads department. There Morrison became involved in safety efforts and was soon a member of the county's safety committee where he learned the challenges and the importance of a good safety culture. For more than six years this background has helped Morrison in his current job as a Loss Control Representative.



The third team member, Ron Sinnwell, joined the department in 2007. Sinnwell, a Des Moines native, has been in the safety profession for more than 30 years. He worked for Northwestern Bell, first as a truck driver and then on a line crew and as an installation and repair technician. Sinnwell learned early,

both as a driver and a guy who climbed a lot of telephone poles, the value of safety. One mistake could be a travesty, even fatal. His safety-conscious attitude landed Sinnwell a job as safety manager for US West, a position he held until he took early retirement in 2001. A desire to stay involved in the safety field lead Sinnwell to Continental Western Insurance Company as a loss control representative for five years, and later to the IMWCA Loss Control Department. Sinnwell holds several professional designations, including the Certified Safety Professional (CSP) and Certified Director of Safety (CDS).

These safety professionals hold nearly 100 years of combined safety service, offering IMWCA membership valuable insight and expertise. All three are committed to working with all members, large and small, to help ensure one simple thing – that each members' most valuable resource, its employees, return home safe at the end of each day.

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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