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ONLINE UNIVERSITY COURSE HIGHLIGHT

Behavior-Based Safety
Training: BB09

Learn more online
www.imwca.org

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Comments or suggestions, call
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the Informer

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

Ladder Safety: Climbing to success

Whether it is a stepstool with two treads, a six foot step ladder or a 20 foot extension ladder, most of us will climb a ladder sometime in our life. Perhaps it's the familiarity with ladders that can cause us to become complacent about the potential dangers of using them incorrectly.

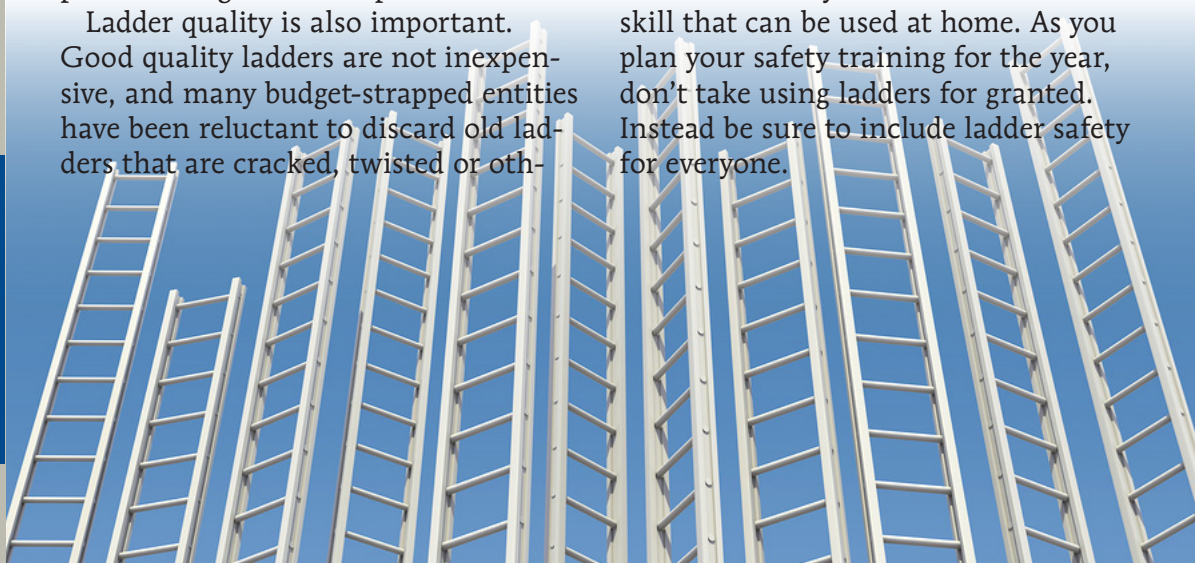
Ladder safety begins by selecting the right ladder for the job. The biggest mistake many people make with ladders is using one that is too short for the task. This leads the user to stand on the ladder's top rungs which can cause imbalance. The weight of the user should also be taken into account during selection. Ladders are rated by load, and using a ladder too light for the job can cause the ladder to fall or collapse. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires that ladders in the workplace be rated for a minimum of 250 pounds. However, if an employee that weighs 255 pounds is going to use the ladder, then a ladder with a 300 pound rating should be provided.

Ladder quality is also important. Good quality ladders are not inexpensive, and many budget-strapped entities have been reluctant to discard old ladders that are cracked, twisted or otherwise

broken. However, when ladders have sprung or bent rails, steps, rungs or spreaders the load rating is significantly reduced causing it to be wobbly and unsafe. Any ladder with a defect should be immediately discarded. A good inspection program is important to ladder safety. Many manufacturers have a recommended inspection plan on their Web site.

Finally, train employees on how to select, inspect and properly set up and use ladders. Most manufacturers have guidelines on how to correctly set up a ladder. It is also important to teach proper climbing technique, where to stand and how much reach is safe. There are videos and online training sessions that can be used for employee training. Make sure to provide training on each type of ladder in your workplace and document the training.

A good ladder safety program will not only help keep your employees safe at work and help with OSHA compliance, but ladder safety is also a valuable life skill that can be used at home. As you plan your safety training for the year, don't take using ladders for granted. Instead be sure to include ladder safety for everyone.



Recently, an IMWCA member had an employee rear-ended by a semi on a rural county road while operating a motor grader. Fortunately, the employee survived the incident with only minor cuts due to the fact that he was wearing his seat belt in accordance with both state law and the member's seatbelt/restraint use policy. Had the employee not been wearing his seatbelt, it is likely that he could have been ejected from the vehicle and seriously injured or worse.

Model Seatbelt/Restraint Policy

It is the policy of *(name of member)* that all employees operating official vehicles, equipment, personal and rental cars on official business and other occupants use seatbelts and shoulder restraints.

Employees operating equipment with a Rollover Protective Structure (ROPS) shall use seatbelts when operating the equipment.

Employees are also prohibited from riding in or on parts of a vehicle not designed for human occupancy. This includes but is not limited to pickup and truck boxes, fenders, steps and bumpers.

Failure to comply with these rules is a violation of *(name of member)* safety policies, which is cause for disciplinary action.

We at IMWCA want to take this opportunity to remind our members that for the safety of all employees we require that members implement and enforce a mandatory seatbelt policy. The policy should require all employees operating or using equipment with a Rollover Protective Structure (ROPS) properly wear seatbelts, on and off the road.

It is not enough to simply train your employees to follow state law concerning the use of seatbelts. Employees should be trained to use a seatbelt any time they are operating, or riding as a passenger in, a vehicle while "on the job." This includes both on-road and off-road vehicles. We recommend that each member review their policy, update as necessary, and train employees on the policy on an ongoing basis.

To assist our members IMWCA offers a model policy (on the left) which can be downloaded in Word format at www.imwca.org/LossControl/pages/ModelPrograms.aspx.

For more guidance or assistance, please contact your IMWCA loss control representative or email us at losscontrol@iowaleague.org.

CLAIMS CORNER: Matt Jackson, Claims Manager

Benefits of a light duty return-to-work

Many employers struggle with effectively managing workers' compensation claim costs. Creating a clear and concise light duty return-to-work program is one way to help manage those costs. Paying a large amount in indemnity benefits on a claim leads to higher experience modification factors along with the potential for increased insurance costs. Studies have shown that an early return to work improved physical recovery of the injured employee, which may lead to decreased medical costs.

Reducing premiums is not the only benefit of having a light duty program. A light duty program ensures that restrictions are being followed while the employee is at work. It also sends a clear message to other employees that having a work injury does not mean getting a paid vacation. The longer an employee is away from work, the harder it is to get them back to work. Also, the employee does not have to make a psychological adjustment to return to their job after being away.

A light duty program can also decrease fraudulent behavior. It discourages malingering and will return the employee to their normal job quicker. An injured employee working light duty contributes to overall produc-

tivity. Co-workers are not left to assume the full work load of the injured employee. You invest time and money to hire and train your employees, in a sense, having a light duty program protects this investment.

The injured employee also sees benefits of working a light duty job:

- Improved self esteem
- Reduced financial hardship
- Reduced stress (not worried about loss of job)
- Maintains relationships with fellow employees
- Remains mentally and physically conditioned to a regular work schedule

Light duty programs take preparation and creativity to assure employees are returned to meaningful work that supports both medical recovery and business goals. Be proactive in establishing a light duty program. Create a written policy. Meet with your designated clinic to discuss your return to work policy. Educate employees on expectations when they have an injury and are given work restrictions. Finally, have a list of light duty jobs or tasks available when an injury does occur.

Online learning explodes

The number of IMWCA members taking advantage of the free Online University continues to grow. In the first five months of 2015, more than 500 new users have signed up for over 4,000 courses, with a 97 percent completion rate! For the month of May, over 700 courses were started. Here are the top five most popular courses for May:

1. Bloodborne Pathogens – 76 courses taken
2. Employee Safety Awareness – 76 courses taken
3. Emergency Response in the Workplace – 50 courses taken
4. General Ergonomics – 40 courses taken
5. Fire Prevention – 39 courses taken

IMWCA adds one new, free course each month. Here are the upcoming new offerings:

- July | Behavior-Based Safety Training: BB09
- August | Defensive Driving-Refresher: DD09
- September | Ergonomics for Supervisors: EV09
- October | Occupational Disease Prevention for Firefighters: OP09
- November | Preventing Slips, Trips, Falls for Firefighters: ST62
- December | Supervisors Safety Awareness Program: SU11

Thank you to all members using the Online University, keep up the great work! If you have not yet joined the online learning experience, learn more at www.imwca.org/LossControl/pages/OnlineUniversity.aspx.



Send your calendar-worthy photos



In 2016 IMWCA and Iowa Communities Assurance Pool (ICAP) will once again produce a joint calendar for our members. Any entity with membership in IMWCA will receive a calendar in the mail in December.

This year's calendar will include photos of entities with membership in both programs. For a chance to be featured in the calendar, submit your photos on-

line at <http://leagueeditor/Pages/FileBox.aspx>. Please include your email address, member entity name and the word "calendar" in your message.

Only high-resolution images will be used in the calendar. The deadline for submitting photos is September 7. Questions may be directed to bethanycrile@iowaleague.org.

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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