

MARCH
2015

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ONLINE UNIVERSITY COURSE HIGHLIGHT

Hydrogen Sulfide
Awareness: HS11

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.

National Work Zone Safety Week

March 23-27 is designated as National Work Zone Safety Awareness Week, an annual spring campaign held at the start of construction season to encourage safe driving through highway work zones and construction sites. The key message is for drivers to use extra caution in work zones. The theme for National Work Zone Awareness Week 2015 is "Expect the Unexpected." This was the original theme used 15 years ago in the national event that was created to focus attention on work zone safety and work zone workers. Since the creation of the national campaign by the Federal Highway Administration, the American Traffic Safety Services Association and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials the number of work zone fatalities has dropped significantly.

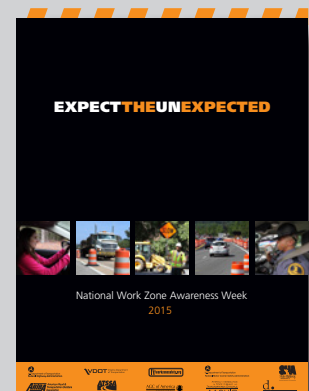
IMWCA provides workers' compensation coverage to more than 500 municipal organizations in Iowa, and the largest group as measured by class code (type of work) are the employees maintaining our streets and roads. This group of employees plow our roads in the winter, repair our roads all year long, and are the people we see wearing all that high visibility clothing as we drive through a work zone. Add to that other IMWCA member employees such as law enforcement officers and fire & EMS personnel responding to a crash, and you get the idea why IMWCA is always working to raise awareness about work zone safety.

The average motorist may not notice, however there's a lot of planning and engineering that goes into a work zone.

It takes a lot of training and dedication to set up a proper work zone. One look at the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) will make the novice cringe with the sheer volume of the document. Section Six, Temporary Traffic Control (TTC), is about 200 pages of information on how to "provide for the reasonably safe and effective movement of road users through or around TTC zones while reasonably protecting road users, workers, responders to traffic incidents and equipment."

IMWCA's Online University offers courses on work zone safety, including Work Zone Safety and Avoiding the Crash Zone. You can learn more at www.imwca.org/LossControl/pages/OnlineUniversity.aspx. Take the time to review work zone safety in your organization before the season gets in full swing. We want everyone to have the opportunity to go home safe at the end of their work day.

Poster available for download.



www.atssa.com/Events/NationalWorkZoneAwarenessWeek.aspx



Safely Speaking

Seasonal and new hire orientation

With spring around the corner, it is time to plan your safety orientation training for seasonal hires. To develop and deliver effective safety training there are three steps that should be followed:

1) Use a job description. Identify the tasks an employee will perform and determine what hazards are present in those tasks. For example, if an employee will mow grass in parks, then the employee has exposure to power equipment, flammable chemicals, loud noise and poisonous insects or plants, to name a few. See the model orientation program at www.imwca.org.

2) Once hazards are identified, develop a training list for the employee. In the example given above, the training would include power equipment operation, hazardous communications, hearing conservation and personal protective equipment (PPE), and first aid/medical reporting procedures.

3) Deliver the training. Different levels of exposures require different levels of training. For example, operating the riding mowers should require hands-on competency training. In this example the supervisor gives the new

employee a general overview of how to properly run the mower; then has the employee perform various exercises on the mower to prove they are competent operators.

In the case of handling the mower fuel, the supervisor can use online training for the hazardous communication standard and cover the department's procedures on such issues as safety data sheet location, fuel storage and PPE use.

It is also important to identify who or how the training will be delivered. Some competency-based training can be provided by internal staff with expertise or by vendors that specialize in areas like power equipment. Other awareness level training can be provided through online training, DVDs or general speakers. Remember to always supplement awareness level training with the specific information from your entity's written standard operating procedures.

As always, the safety orientation should be completed before the employee starts performing the hazardous task, and training should be properly documented.

These general steps should help keep our seasonal employees safe and productive.

Safely Speaking

Below 100 initiative

The last time the number of police officer line-of duty deaths was below 100 was 1944. That number reached a high of 278 in 1974, and for the last few years has fluctuated between 116 and 185. Over the course of the last ten years, more than 150 officers (on average) have died each year in the line of duty.

In 2010 the Below 100 initiative was created to reduce police line-of-duty deaths to fewer than 100 per year. The initiative is led by a team of core trainers, with support from outside sponsors.

By concentrating on the areas of loss that are most susceptible to change (e.g. use of safety equipment and enhanced situational awareness), Below 100 can serve as an instrument of cultural transformation and improved operational practices. Below 100 recognizes that awareness and training are key and the trainers and decision makers in organizations can be change agents

We encourage you to be an agent of change within your department. Together, we can get Below 100!

As a supporter of the Below 100 initiative, IMWCA encourages all the decision makers to not only support this initiative, but to attend a training.

Currently a session is scheduled for March 23 in Ainsworth. Learn more at www.counterdrugtraining.com.



**Wear your Belt,
Wear your Vest,
Watch your Speed,
What's important Now,
and Complacency Kills**



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Statute of limitations

According to legal-dictionary.com the definition of a statute of limitations is, “a type of federal or state law that restricts the time within which legal proceedings may be brought.”

All states set a time limitation in which to file a lawsuit. For example, in Wisconsin there is a 12-year statute of limitations regarding workers’ compensation claims. Generally, in Iowa there is a two-tier statute of limitations when it comes to workers’ compensation claims.

When no weekly (indemnity) benefits are paid there is a two year statute of limitations from the date of injury. When weekly (indemnity) benefits are paid there is a three year statute of limitations from the date the weekly (indemnity) benefits end. Generally, there is no statute of limitations regarding medical benefits related to the injury once weekly (indemnity) benefits are paid.

There is also another deadline involved with workplace injuries, and that is notifying your employer of the

injury. The law provides that the employer must have notice or knowledge of an alleged injury within 90 days of occurrence. The 90 day period begins when the employee knew or should have known that the injury was work-related. Notification can be given verbally or in writing.

If the statute of limitations runs out the claim can be barred from being heard, no matter how legitimate the claim may be. Statutes of limitations are intended to encourage the resolution of claims within a reasonable amount of time. They are also designed to prevent fraudulent claims and stale claims from arising after all evidence has been lost. As time passes people’s memories fade, witnesses disappear, documents are lost and medical records are sometimes destroyed. Statute of limitation laws provide some parameters so cases are filed in a timely manner.

Iowa Work Zone Quick Facts

350 work zone crashes occur per year in Iowa

5.0 work zone fatalities per year
(10-year average, 2004-2013)

230 work zone crashes result in property damage

75% of Iowa work zone crashes are rear-end crashes

Annual traffic on Iowa highways has increased more than 35 percent during the past 10 years - increased traffic wears out roads faster and makes repairs necessary...and thus, more work zones. (Source: Iowa DOT)

Payroll Worksheet reminder

IMWCA mailed your payroll worksheets in February for the upcoming 2015-2016 policy renewal. Please review your worksheet and indicate any payroll that differs from our estimate. The deadline to return the worksheet is March 27, 2015, so we can record your adjustments and calculate an accurate estimate of your renewal premium. Final Estimated Premium Schedules, Information Pages, and Invoices will be mailed in May.

Contact us at (800) 257-2708 or imwcainfo@iowaleague.org if you have not yet received your payroll worksheet or with any questions.

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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