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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.

Arc flash and NFPA 70E

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 70E, Standard for Electrical Safety in the Workplace has received a lot of attention in the past few years. 70E is commonly referred to as the Arc Flash Standard. While the topic may seem new, the standard has been around since 1979 when it was known as Standard for Electrical Safety Requirements for Employee Workplaces.

All the attention may be attributed to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) response to an inquiry on arc flash hazard. The response, in part, stated: "Though OSHA does not, per se, enforce NFPA standard, 2000 edition, OSHA considers NFPA standard a recognized industry practice. The employer is required to conduct an assessment in accordance with CFR 1910.132(d)(1). If an arc flash is present, or likely to be present, the employer must select and require employees to use the protective apparel. Employers who conduct hazard/risk assessment, and select and require their employees to use protective clothing and other personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate to the task, as stated in the NFPA 70E standard, 2000 edition, are deemed in compliance with Hazard Assessment and Equipment Selection OSHA Standard."

Simply stated, OSHA provides the "shall" and 70E provides the "how." NFPA 70E defines arc flash hazard as "a dangerous condition associated with the release of energy caused by an

electric arc." Arc flash results from an arcing fault where the electric arcs and resulting radiation and shrapnel cause severe skin burns, hearing damage and eye injuries, in addition to inhalation hazards and tremendous pressure.

NFPA 70E is the standard for providing a safe environment for employees who work with or are exposed to electrical hazards. As mentioned earlier, 70E has been around for some time. Like every other NFPA standard it is constantly being reviewed and updated. 2012 is the ninth edition and the most current issue of 70E. It contains 19 changes including:

- Flame resistant (FR) has been changed to arc rated (AR) in regard to PPE throughout the standard.
- Work practice now requires the use of ground fault circuit interrupters to protect employees.
- New, three-year intervals for employee retraining and electrical safety program auditing.

If you remember one thing about working with or around electricity, remember OSHA 1910.333(a)(1) states: "Live parts to which an employee may be exposed shall be de-energized before the employee works on or near them, unless the employer can demonstrate that de-energizing introduces additional or increased hazards or is infeasible due to equipment design or operational limitations. Live parts that operate at less than 50 volts to ground need not be

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de-energized if there will be no increased exposure to electrical burns or to explosion due to electric arcs.”

Simply put, the energy must be de-energized and locked-out prior to work being performed. If this is not feasible, NFPA 70E provides the “how.”

CLAIMS CORNER:

Matt Jackson, Claims Manager

Timing matters

Timely reporting of an injury makes it possible to begin managing the claim and its costs earlier. It also allows us to quickly guide the injured worker to your designated physician/clinic. Providing an injured worker with appropriate medical care in a timely manner decreases frustrations and reduces the chances of litigation.

Since the early reporting of claims can have such a positive impact on treatment, it is IMWCA’s recommendation that you implement a 24-hour reporting policy for all work-related injuries. This means your employees are required to report all work-related injuries to their supervisor and Company Nurse within 24 hours of occurrence.

The amount of time that passes between when the injury happens and when the injury is reported is directly correlated to the likelihood the claim will be litigated. Claims reported after one month are much more likely to be litigated than claims reported within 24-hours of the injury.

Early reporting gives us the opportunity to make sure evidence is preserved in subrogation situations. We are also able to talk with and take statements of key witnesses early, while the event is still fresh in their memory. When a claim is turned in late, it forces us to be reactive instead of proactive in our claims handling.

The Company Nurse call center is staffed 24/7/365, making it easy to call in an injury when it happens. We understand many city and county employees work weekends and holidays, so it is beneficial to call Company Nurse immediately to speak with a registered nurse. The nurse is able to give care advice and refer to your designated physician/clinic, if appropriate.

Remember reporting claims as quickly as possible can help lower costs, reduce fees, and ensure that injured workers receive appropriate and timely medical care.



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Welcome, new members, to our program!

This spring, the following members
joined IMWCA:

Arcadia
Burlington Municipal Waterworks
Calmar
Huxley
Ida Grove
Quasqueton
Spencer
Swisher
Vinton

Renewals are coming!

IMWCA staff is in the process of putting together our members’ renewal packets for the 2013-2014 policy period. Experience Modification (MOD) Factors for all of our members have been promulgated and IMWCA staff is now processing the Estimated Payroll Worksheets, the final piece to completing the renewals. When reviewing your renewal, please keep in mind that the National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI) sets the rates, which are approved by the State of Iowa Insurance Commissioner, and that all carriers in Iowa use the same rates. For the class codes that IMWCA writes, we are generally seeing a slight increase in those rates.

The IMWCA’s Board of Trustees approved an increase in our discounts to help offset rate increases, with the average discount growing from 23 percent to 27 percent. In addition, many members will also enjoy a Good Experience Bonus, an additional discount for members with a MOD Factor of .95 or better.

Your local agent will have a copy of your renewal as well, and if you have specific questions concerning your MOD factor, or anything to do with your renewal, please contact your local trusted advisor. Feel free to contact Amanda Werner in our office as well at amandawerner@iowaleague.org or (515) 974-5341.

Solid Waste Workshop a success

IMWCA hosted 29 representatives from solid waste agencies around Iowa for its second annual Solid Waste Workshop, held at Zeigler Caterpillar in Altoona.

Attendees enjoyed the following presentations:

Angela Vaughn, Des Moines County Regional Solid Waste Commission; Bryce Stalcup, Waste Commission of Scott County; and Dean Schade, IMWCA Loss Control Representative, shared safety training tips and discussed methods to document training.

Scot Stoltenberg of Iowa Mechanical Contractors Association covered the changes to the Hazardous Communications Standards, commonly referred to as the Globally Harmonized System.

Curt Svalstad, IMWCA Director of Risk Services, did a summary of changes to the way experience modification factors are being calculated and how it will affect workers' compensation premiums going forward.

Ed Morrison and Dean Schade, IMWCA Loss control staff, presented on personal protective equipment selection and maintenance procedures.

Scott Smith of Boone County conducted a question/answer session on safety committees. Scott covered questions on how to set up a committee, its membership, meeting frequency and developing goals and a meeting agenda.

Thank you to all of our guest presenters for sharing your experience and insight with us! Thank you also to Zeigler Caterpillar for allowing us to use their beautiful facilities.

At the conclusion of the workshop, attendees were enthusiastic about next year's solid waste workshop. We'll keep you posted on the dates and agenda for next year's event.



IMWCA Informer is a bimonthly 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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