

OCTOBER
2015

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ONLINE UNIVERSITY COURSE HIGHLIGHT

Occupational Disease
Prevention for
Firefighters: OP09
Learn more online
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IOWA MUNICIPALITIES WORKERS' COMPENSATION ASSOCIATION

IMWCA

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the Informer

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

Fire Prevention Week, October 4-10

National Fire Prevention Week 2015 is October 4-10. This year's theme is "Hear the BEEP Where you SLEEP."

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) half of home fire deaths result from fires reported between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m.; however, only one in five home fires were reported during these hours, when most people are asleep. To learn more about fire prevention week visit www.nfpa.org/safety-information/fire-prevention-week.

IMWCA works hard to help all member employees go home safe at the end of their work day, and one way is to highlight some important information about fire safety on-the-job.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, fires and explosion accounted for 148 workplace deaths in 2013. This number has remained steady since 2007, however there is no excuse for a workplace injury or fatality due to fire. The Occupation Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recommends that all employers have an emergency plan in case of fire, and it requires these plans for certain industries such as hazardous chemical processing.

A few basic tips:

- Practice good housekeeping. Clutter contributes to fires by providing fuel and preventing access to emergency exits and equipment.
- Report electrical hazards. Electrical fires are the second most frequent cause of workplace fires. Extension cords and overloaded circuits are big contributors. Have a qualified electrician place outlets where needed.
- Use and store chemicals safely. Read the label on the Safety Data Sheet to determine flammability and other hazards. Provide adequate ventilation when using and storing chemicals.
- Smoke only in designated areas. Never smoke in storerooms or chemical storage areas, and extinguish smoking materials safely.
- Never block sprinklers, firefighting equipment or emergency exits.
- Learn how to properly use a fire extinguisher. When a fire extinguisher is provided by the employer fire extinguisher training is required by OSHA.



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- Post emergency telephone numbers as well as the building address by the phone in your work area for quick access in case of emergency.
- Last but not least, have an evacuation plan in place, and practice your plan. Just like a tornado drill in the spring, a fire drill every fall is a good refresher for new and experienced employees.

A variety of fire safety courses are available through IMWCA's Online University. Check out the Online University at www.imwca.org/LossControl/pages/OnlineUniversity.aspx.

Fire prevention week is a time when the entire country takes time to highlight fire safety. Take time to refresh your fire safety awareness, both at work and at home. We want you to go home safe, and have a safe home to go to.



Hear the **BEEP** where you **SLEEP**

EVERY BEDROOM NEEDS A WORKING SMOKE ALARM.

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK OCT. 4-10, 2015

firepreventionweek.org

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Safely Speaking

Excavation Safety Guide

A trench collapses—and a life is lost. We have all seen this in the news. In Iowa this has occurred three times in the past six months. Each time the IMWCA loss control team hears about an incident like this, we cringe, knowing these deaths are preventable.

IMWCA members are directly or indirectly exposed to this danger on a regular basis. Many municipalities perform water, sewer and other excavation activities that involve open trenches. Even when the member hires a contractor to dig a municipal employee often ends up entering the trench to perform work. Add to that the fire and EMS departments that are called upon to render aid when the unthinkable happens and someone is buried in a trench collapse.

The Occupation Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has promulgated a set of rules and regulations that, when followed,

will eliminate almost any situation where a trench collapse can result in a fatality. You can find them here: www.osha.gov/pls/os-haweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=10930. Problems occur when people are unaware of the rules, are unaware of the dangers inherent in a trench, or when they choose to ignore the rules and take short cuts.

IMWCA offers an awareness level course through our Online University. You can learn more about the course online at www.imwca.org/LossControl/pages/OnlineUniversity.aspx. Recently we also introduced an Excavation Safety Guide that provides an awareness level overview of excavation safety and the requirements. Although it is just a guide, and it is not intended to take the place of OSHA requirements, it can help you get to know what you don't know so employees exposed



to excavation work understand what to look for and the inherent dangers any time an open excavation is part of their job. Find the guide online at www.imwca.org/LossControl/pages/ModelPrograms.aspx.

Customizable Model Programs available at www.imwca.org.

9-volt battery safety

With Fire Prevention Week occurring October 4-10 this year, we are all reminded to test our smoke alarms and, perhaps, change the batteries. However, even in storing those 9-volt batteries for the alarms, we must take care.

In 9-volt batteries the positive and negative posts are close together. If a metal object touches the two posts of a 9-volt battery it can cause a short circuit, which can create enough heat to start a fire. Therefore, it is unsafe to store 9-volt batteries in a drawer near metal objects like paper clips, coins, pens, keys, aluminum foil or even other batteries. Even weak batteries may have enough charge to cause a fire. In fact, some fires have started in the trash when 9-volt batteries were thrown away with other metal items.

It's best to keep 9-volt batteries in original packaging until you are ready to use them. If loose, keep the posts covered with masking, duct or electrical tape to prevent the posts from coming in contact with metal objects. Be sure they are someplace where they won't be tossed around and, preferably, are upright.

It is best to properly dispose of 9-volt batteries at a collection site for household hazardous waste. To be safe, cover the positive and negative posts with masking, duct, or electrical tape before getting rid of batteries.

Remember to check the batteries in your home's smoke alarms to ensure your family has the early warning to get out safely if a fire should occur.



Source: www.nfpa.org/safety-information/fire-prevention-week/

Safely Speaking

One Day Safety University, October 14



From the 2014 One Day Safety University

The 2015 One Day Safety University is fast approaching. This year's lineup features sessions on ladder safety by Giant Ladder Company and chainsaw safety by Stihl. There will also be member-led sessions on restarting a broken safety culture, showing how safety pays, and getting volunteer firefighters to

buy into the safety criteria. Finally, IMWCA staff will present on the top 10 causes of injuries in Fiscal Year 2014-2015.

Although the class is free, pre-registration is required and space is limited. Register online or learn more at www.imwca.org. See you October 14 in Ankeny.

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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