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ONLINE UNIVERSITY
COURSE HIGHLIGHT

EM51: Sexual Harassment Prevention for Employees

Learn more online
www.imwca.org

The Informer

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

Save on workers' compensation premiums

Everyone wants to decrease the amount they pay on workers' compensation premiums. The question is, "how?" There are a number of ways to reduce premiums depending on your size, but in the end there is one solution that everyone can utilize: reduce or eliminate claims.

Claims affect the experience modification factor and discounts significantly. One area to focus on in particular is slips and falls. Claims caused by slips and falls account for 25 percent of the total number of claims and 25 percent of all claim costs. This makes slips and falls is the number one source of losses.

Another reason to focus on slip and fall prevention is that these claims are generally very avoidable. Eliminating slip and fall claims is a year-round project. Inspect your work areas for hazards, such as uneven walking surfaces, cords in walkways or broken steps. Identifying and correcting these problems is a start.

In addition, teach employees good walking habits. Encourage them to stay on maintained surfaces. Avoid carrying items that can obstruct vision of the path or cause loss of balance. Slow down when conditions are not ideal.

Proper footwear is an essential element of slip and fall prevention. This



Learn more about solutions and resources available to help prevent slips and falls.

includes footwear that is weather appropriate, has good soles and easy to maneuver in.

Finally, remember that climbing ladders, getting in and out of vehicles and climbing stairs are also areas to train employees.

IMWCA sees cities and counties with a good experience modification factor get hit with a big jump in premium as a result of an avoidable slip and fall claim. If you want to save money on premiums, work on eliminating slip and falls since they are a pervasive problem that can be easily corrected with minimal effort. Not only will slip and fall prevention and training help prevent costly claims, it can also help to ensure that each employees goes home safe at the end of the workday.



See you there!

Regional Workshops are taking place across the Rstate in January and February. Register or learn more online at www.imwca.org.

Get the most from your on-site workout facilities

Employers are looking at ways to get their employees moving and motivated, and many have started providing employees with on-site fitness centers and recreational rooms. Employees with access to an on-site workout facility are able to keep up with a healthy lifestyle without having to invest in a gym membership. It also helps by not compromising your employee's busy schedules. Employers that encourage a work-life balance and promote wellness are seen as caring about their employees' health and well-being. This helps with employee retention long-term. It could also help boost productivity and improve morale while reducing stress.

Although IMWCA has not seen a significant number of claims involving the use of these facilities, you should be aware there is exposure for someone to get injured at these facilities and file a claim. Depending on the circumstance and the facts of the claim, it could be found to be a compensable workers' compensation injury.

While workers' compensation laws generally bar coverage for injuries sustained outside the scope of an employee's job duties, there is a grey area when it comes to on-site workout facilities. Being on your premises is an important first link in helping determine compensability. We will also need to look at if the employer is seeing a benefit for the injured employee using the facility. Do you provide extra perks, such as reduced health care premiums and/or cash incentives when employees use the facility? Do you require that certain employees need to be in good shape to perform their job? Do certain jobs

have fitness standards? Do you promote and encourage the use of the facility?

If you do have an on-site workout facility the following recommendations can help reduce or limit your exposure for an employee getting hurt while working out:

- Have the employee sign in/out when using the facility or use a key card.
- Have a video surveillance system.
- Have a fitness professional train employees on the use of the equipment.
- Ensure the equipment is maintained and working properly.
- The employee's doctor needs to give permission for the employee to perform a workout routine.
- Have employees sign a waiver. This is not ironclad and maybe more psychological than legal.

These recommendations can ensure both the employer and the employee get the most from an on-site wellness facility.



Registration open for annual Solid Waste Safety Workshop in Altoona

On March 20 IMWCA will host its annual Solid Waste Safety Workshop. The event will run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Ziegler CAT facility in Altoona. The workshop is free to members and non-members and includes lunch.

The agenda for this year's workshop is still being finalized. As in past years, the agenda will include topics suggested by solid waste professionals. Presenters will include industry representatives, Iowa Occupational Safety and Health Administration (IOSHA) representatives and IMWCA staff. IMWCA will be seeking approval from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for .4 CEUs for certified landfill operators.

Topics for this year's workshop include:

- SWANA Safety Awareness Program Update

- Hiring Employees at Solid Waste Facilities and a Discussion about Harassment Issues
- Online University Training Update
- IMWCA and Workers' Compensation Update
- IOSHA Update
- Lock Out/Tag Out for Heavy Equipment
- IMWCA Solid Waste Related Injury Data

Do you have an idea for a session topic? Please share your thoughts with Scott Smith at scottsmith@iowaleague.org as soon as possible. There is still time in the agenda for an additional topic.

Register or learn more online at www.imwca.org. Please register early as space is limited! Questions can be sent to losscontrol@iowaleague.org.

RTWNow tools you should use, right now

Are you taking advantage of the electronic tool that IMWCA offers, RTWNow? If not, you are missing out on a valuable tool.

RTWNow has two specific tools designed to help our members. First, the RTWNow database has a bank of essential job functions (EJFs) templates for you to utilize with your job descriptions. There is also a modified duty database (TWAs) to assist you with modifying existing jobs to temporarily return employees to work on light-duty assignments.



Check out this YouTube video explaining the Tracker feature of RTWNow.

The RTWNow Tracker software automatically takes the first report of injury information from Company Nurse Report and places it in the Tracker database. From there you are able track each employee's claim. Tracker will allow you

to enter data for each claim, including treatment and status of the employee (restricted, time off, return to full duty, etc.). The best part of Tracker: it will produce your OSHA 300 report as needed, and at the end of the calendar year will be able to generate your OSHA 300A report. To learn more about Tracker visit www.imwca.org/AboutIMWCA/services/Pages/ReturnToWorkNow.aspx.

Most cities or counties have multiple locations, (public works building, fire department, police department, secondary roads, sheriff's department, public health, etc.). The recordkeeping of these injuries can be done in a central location, such as the human resources office, courthouse or city hall, but if the departments are in a different location than the main city hall or county courthouse, you need to have an OSHA 300 and 300A log for each location.

For more information contact IMWCA or attend one of the IMWCA regional workshops coming up in January and February. We will be talking about timely safety issues, OSHA recordkeeping, IMWCA/workers compensation trends and updates, and human resources hot topics. Register in the News/Events > Calendar area of www.imwca.org.

IMWCA Informer is a monthly newsletter published by the Iowa Municipalities Workers' Compensation Association (IMWCA) in cooperation with the Iowa League of Cities. View past issues online at www.imwca.org.

Comments or suggestions: contact Bethany Crile, newsletter editor, at (515) 244-7282 or bethanycrile@iowaleague.org.

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Attention agents: training available

County Risk Management Services (CRMS) is hosting its first educational seminar for IMWCA and ICAP insurance agents. The seminar is designed to elevate the level of service and information that members receive from their local agent. Seminars will be held January 16 at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake and January 17 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Johnston from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. This class is approved for four continuing education credits through the Iowa Insurance Division. Registration is available on the CRMS Web site, www.crmsia.com.



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