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# The Informer

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

## Safe for Life

Each June the National Safety Council (NSC) celebrates National Safety Month, which focuses on reducing leading causes of injury and death at work, on the roads and in our homes and communities. The 2016 theme is Safe for Life.

IMWCA is working to help get every member home safe at the end of their day. But safety doesn't stop when you leave your place of employment. Staying safe on the road, returning to your family and friends is just as important. We encourage you to take what you learn at work and share your good habits. This year the NSC is focusing on being prepared for an emergency, staying healthy, preventing slip and fall incidents, and driving.

### Week 1: Stand Ready to Respond

On any given day anything can happen, from a slip and fall to a natural disaster. By assessing potential risks and preparing a plan to respond, you can stay ahead of an incident, whenever it may happen. Even the fastest emergency responders could take eight or more minutes to respond. Being trained in first aid and CPR could mean the difference between life and death. If you work in an office or group setting, consider an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) for the office. Most AED's are designed so they are truly automatic, easy to use and save lives.

### Week 2: Be Healthy

Every day we make decisions that have a direct impact on our health. Making good choices around food and exercise can help keep us in shape and



avoid injuries. When an injury occurs, we can still make good choices in deciding which medications to take. IMWCA members with law enforcement, fire and EMS staff can take advantage of two excellent programs to encourage total worker health. The fire service leads the way with the Everyone Goes Home program ([www.everyonegoeshome.com](http://www.everyonegoeshome.com)). Law enforcement has a similar program, Below 100, targeted towards their unique exposures (<http://below100.org>).

### Week 3: Watch Out for Dangers

Being safe means being alert—all the time. Distracted walking is on the rise and contributes to more and more slip and fall injuries. Put the cell phone down and pay attention to the task. When you do need to use the phone or check an email, stop whatever you

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## ONLINE UNIVERSITY COURSE HIGHLIGHT

DOT Reasonable Suspicion for Drug, Alcohol Testing: Signs and Symptoms of Alcohol Use

Learn more online  
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are doing, find a safe location to work and give your attention to the device. IMWCA is working to reduce on-the-job slip and fall injuries. To learn more check out the Slip and Fall Handbook by IMWCA ([www.imwca.org/LossControl/pages/ModelPrograms.aspx](http://www.imwca.org/LossControl/pages/ModelPrograms.aspx)).

#### Week 4: Share the Road Safely

Our roads are becoming more crowded every day. Since you cannot control the actions of others, we all need to drive defensively. This begins with the attitude you take every time you get behind the wheel and includes managing your speed and the space between you and other vehicles.

Never use a cell phone while driving; this includes hands-free. Most important, ALWAYS wear your seat belt!

June may be National Safety Month, but safety is a 12 month, 24/7 journey. To learn more about National Safety Month and take advantage of the many free resources you can use all year visit [www.nsc.org/act/events/Pages/national-safety-month.aspx](http://www.nsc.org/act/events/Pages/national-safety-month.aspx).



# Payroll audits

The 2015-2016 Fiscal Year is coming to an end, and that means payroll audits. Last year someone at your entity estimated the payroll on which the workers' compensation premium was based.

The purpose of the audit is to verify actual payroll figures to ensure that the appropriate amount of premium is collected. Audits will be performed in July and August by IMWCA's contracted firm, Information Providers, Inc. (IPI). Each member will receive a memorandum from IPI detailing the information needed to complete the audit, as well as an appointment letter to schedule the audit. Having this information readily available will help the auditor efficiently complete the audit with fewer callbacks to the member to obtain missing information.

After your audit has been completed, requests for changes or corrections must be made within 30 days of the date your audit was processed by IMWCA. That date will appear on the Audited Premium Schedule that will arrive with your copy of the audit. Your local agent will also receive copies of these documents.

When the review period has ended, each member will receive either an invoice for the balance due, or a refund check. Questions about the audit process may be addressed to Montie Gannon or Jeff Hovey toll free at (800) 257-2708.

## Continued look at slip, fall causations

In this installment of the review of top slip and fall causations, we will look at falls from equipment and slips in ditches.

Falls from equipment are a significant cause of injury to IMWCA members this year. It also happens to be one of the most preventable. Most trucks, loaders and other large equipment come with instructions on how to mount and dismount the equipment with three points of contact. In fact, many dealers and manufacturers have produced DVDs to demonstrate the proper procedure for the specific equipment. Employers should use these DVDs or online training resources to annually train or provide refresher training to all operators on the use three points of contact. The annual training should also cover the employers' policy on following this as a mandatory safety procedure. Once training is done and documented, it becomes important for the employer to then observe that the procedure is followed and provide discipline when it is not.

Slips in ditches are a result of slick footing or hidden trip hazards and imbalance while trying to carry or pull something up a steep incline. Proper footwear is essential to help provide good traction whenever entering a



ditch. When possible, use worn areas of travel that have limited grass and weed coverage. When carrying tools, try to carry less to avoid imbalance or use a human chain to pass equipment down to work area. Finally, take your time when entering or climbing out of ditches, and focus on your footing and balance.

Hopefully you can add these simple precautions to your safety tool box to prevent slip and falls this summer.

Each year more than 41 million Americans—18 percent of the U.S. population—experience some type of mental illness, according to data released by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration in December 2013. With so many people affected, you are very likely to come into contact with someone suffering from mental illness. Trying to tell the difference between what expected behaviors are and what might be the signs of a mental illness isn't always easy. There's no simple test to reveal if there is a mental health concern or if actions and thoughts might be typical behaviors or even the result of a physical illness.

Each mental health concern has its own set of symptoms, but some common signs in adults and adolescents can include:

- Excessive worrying or fear.
- Feeling excessively sad or low.
- Confused thinking or problems concentrating and learning.
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable "highs" or feelings of euphoria.
- Prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger.
- Avoiding friends and social activities.
- Difficulties understanding or relating to other people.
- Changes in sleeping habits or feeling tired and low energy.
- Changes in eating habits such as increased hunger or lack of appetite.

- Changes in sex drive.
- Difficulty perceiving reality (delusions or hallucinations, in which a person experiences and senses things that don't exist in objective reality).
- Inability to perceive changes in one's own feelings, behavior or personality ("lack of insight" or anosognosia).
- Abuse of substances like alcohol or drugs.
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes (such as headaches, stomach aches, vague and ongoing "aches and pains").
- Thinking about suicide.
- Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress.
- An intense fear of weight gain or concern with appearance (mostly in adolescents).

Don't be afraid to reach out if you or someone you know needs help. Learning all you can about mental health is an important first step.

Reach out to your health insurance, primary care doctor or state/county mental health authority or employee assistance plan for more resources.

You may also contact the National Alliance on Mental Illness HelpLine ([www.nami.org/Find-Support/NAMI-HelpLine](http://www.nami.org/Find-Support/NAMI-HelpLine)) to find out what services and supports are available in your community.

Sources: [www.shrm.org](http://www.shrm.org) and [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.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](http://www.imwca.org).

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

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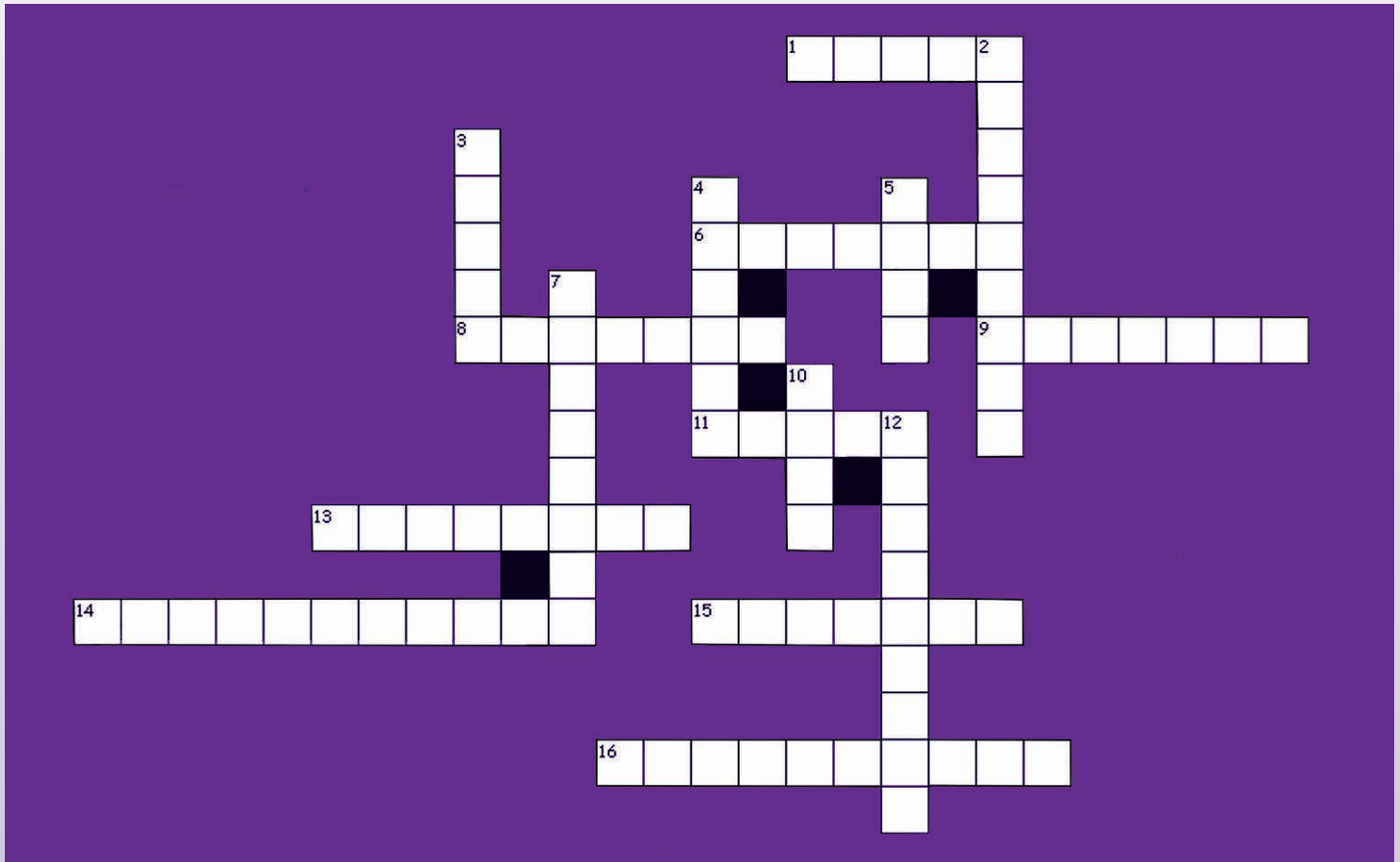
## Like this newsletter?

Check out the multitude of resources at [www.imwca.org](http://www.imwca.org).

- Model/sample programs including general safety manual
- Return to Work Now (RTWNow) online tool
- Video Library & Online University
- Underwriting Information
- MORE!



## SafeForLife Crossword



### Across

1. Keeping an eye out for hazards can help you identify and \_\_\_\_\_ them before an injury occurs.
6. Check your emails and send your texts before you start \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Never use a cell phone while \_\_\_\_\_, even hands-free.
9. Discuss the dangers of mixing prescription drugs with \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Check to make sure your \_\_\_\_\_ detector is working properly.
13. Provide adequate \_\_\_\_\_ in every room and stairway.
14. Prescription \_\_\_\_\_ account for more drug overdoses than heroin and cocaine combined.
15. When driving on long trips, take regular breaks to avoid \_\_\_\_\_.
16. When calling 9-1-1, stay on the line until the \_\_\_\_\_ says you can hang up.

### Down

2. \_\_\_\_\_ an alcohol and drug-free driver or arrange alternate transportation.
3. More than a third of \_\_\_\_\_ injuries and deaths happen at home.
4. Signs of painkiller addiction include excessive mood \_\_\_\_\_ or anxiety.
5. Always allow adequate \_\_\_\_\_ to get to your destination.
7. All medicines and \_\_\_\_\_ should always be kept up and away and out of a child's reach.
10. Keep a fully stocked emergency preparedness kit in your \_\_\_\_\_ and vehicle.
12. Practice \_\_\_\_\_ drills with your family.