Workers Compensation Fund Payroll Auditor – Important Change

At the beginning of each New Year, a final payroll audit is completed on the payrolls from the expiring year. Our WC payroll auditors, GEM Associates, with whom we have worked with for over 30 years, notified us they have decided to retire. After completing a request for proposals earlier this year, we have contracted with Overland Solutions, Inc. (OSI) to complete the 2015 payroll audit. They have 2 resident auditors in the State and are currently in the process of hiring another. OSI is an industry leading, nationwide audit service vendor who provides auditing services for numerous insurance companies, including other self-insurance programs like ours. We have provided them with your contact information and they will contact you directly. We have confidence they will provide the high level of service you are accustomed to.

Our objective is to make the payroll audit process a positive experience. Having the appropriate records available for the audit will allow the auditor to complete the process smoothly. We have prepared a checklist for the most typical records requested for an audit. These records will help in determining the appropriate classifications(s) and correct reportable exposures.

If you have subcontractors working for you, you should always ask them to provide a current Certificate of Insurance. This is critical information to provide the auditor at the time of your audit and can help to avoid possible additional charges.

Prepare for Workers Compensation Payroll Audit – Records Checklist

- Payroll journals/registers
- Employer’s Quarterly Federal Tax Return Form 941 or 943 reports
- State Employer’s Quarterly Unemployment Insurance Tax reports
- Federal 1099, W2, and W3 transmittals
- General ledger/trial balance
- Financial statements
- Check register/canceled checks/bank statements
- Contractors/subcontractors records
- Job cost records/contracts/work invoices showing type of work
- Certificate of WC and/or General Liability Insurance for all subcontractors
- Benefit Plan information such as cafeteria or 401(k) plan wages
- Overtime wages summarized by classification
- List of clerical employees and duties
- Other miscellaneous business records

It is with warm wishes that we announce the retirement of Ruth VanArsdale, Unemployment Compensation Coordinator. Ruth has provided MMA and our members with nearly 35 years of devoted service. Ruth’s attention to detail, commitment to excellence and dedication to our members has been invaluable. Ruth’s last day with MMA will be January 15, 2016.

Please join us in thanking Ruth for her years of dedicated service as we wish her a wonderful and well deserved retirement.

Thank you Ruth and best wishes.
The Safety Enhancement and Scholarship Grant Program is popular with members of the MMA Workers Compensation (WC) Fund and has grown steadily in both the number of requests received and the amounts funded. Grants are awarded in May and October each year. The program allows participating members of the WC Fund to apply for funds to be used to purchase safety equipment or services that assist in reducing the frequency and severity of workplace injuries. The program will match the member’s investment on a 2:1 ratio, i.e. an award of $2,000 (maximum allowed) means the WC Fund would grant $2,000 for the member’s investment of at least $1,000 for a total project cost of at least $3,000. Please note that all applications are reviewed by a committee and awards are made on merit and availability of funds.

We are pleased to announce that 117 of the 132 grant applications received for October 2015 were approved for $152,030, bringing the total commitment for 2015 to $301,891. Since the inception of the program in 1999 more than $3.46 million has been committed and returned to members through safety enhancement grants.

At the November 2015 WC Board of Trustees meeting the Board approved re-funding the Safety Enhancement Reserve as of January 1, 2016 in the amount of $900,000. This amount will be added to remaining balances and used over an approximately three year period. This action by the Board demonstrates its support of a consistently effective program that assists members in the purchase of materials that directly enhance employee safety.

Information for Safety Enhancement Grants can be found on the MMA website at http://www.memun.org/ or by calling the Loss Control Department at 626-5583. Applications for the May 2016 grant period are being accepted until April 30, 2016.

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Welcome New Members

Property & Casualty Pool

Town of Rome

Lincoln Sanitary

Southwest Harbor Water and Sewer District

Workers Compensation Fund

Southwest Harbor Water and Sewer District

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The National League of Cities presents its John G. Stutz award to individuals who have served a total of 25 years or more on the staff of a state municipal league or state league risk pool.

The award has been given each year since 1981 to recognize the contributions of long-time league staff members. The award was presented to Michelle Pelletier Underwriting Manager in Risk Management Services, at the 2015 MMA Annual Convention. The award is named in honor of John G. Stutz, who convened representatives of ten state municipal leagues in 1924 in Lawrence, Kansas for the first meeting of what was to become the American Municipal Association, and subsequently the National League of Cities. At that time, Mr. Stutz was the Executive Secretary (League Director) of the League of Kansas Municipalities.

This year, NLC honored 5 individuals with this prestigious award. Congratulations Michelle and thank you. 🌼

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RMS’s Own Michelle Pelletier Recognized for 25 Years of Service

The Municipal Risk Manager

The Municipal Risk Manager is published seasonally to inform you of developments in municipal risk management which may be of interest to you in your daily business activities. The information in these articles is general in nature and should not be considered advice for any specific risk management or legal question; you should consult with legal counsel or other qualified professional of your own choice.

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Think Outside The Box and Inside The Brick

Last winter’s cold temperatures and the southern exposure of the entrance to Kennebunkport’s Town Hall resulted in many days of ice buildup on the surface of the brick entrance. Ice melting chemicals and ice chippers were used, but it was not unusual for fresh snow or snow falling from the roof to melt and reform as ice at the entrance. There were numerous complaints from employees and the public. The construction style of the building and cost considerations ruled out most alternatives to address the problem. With the help of a Risk Management Services Safety Enhancement Grant from MMA, an ice melting system is being installed. The system features heating coils beneath the bricks that can be programmed to activate when temperatures are below freezing or set using a timed schedule to heat the brick walking surface to above freezing and melt snow and ice. This “think outside the box” and “inside the brick” system is an innovative way to address this specific issue by “engineering out” the hazard.

Maine winters can be dangerous! Just a reminder: the following Safety Shorts are available on the MMA website, http://www.memun.org. These can be used for short training sessions, as handouts or as posters. “Stand Up to Winter” is recommended reading for all employees today.

- Stand Up to Winter
- Cold Weather Conditions
- Understanding Wind Chill
- Snow Blower Safety
- Snow Shoveling Safety
- Snow Plow Safety/Winter Operations
- Don’t Burn Down the Office, Portable Heater Safety

Now is the time!

Now is the time to plan for clearing snow from rooftops and away from buildings. Last year’s record setting snow fall resulted in property loss insurance claims for roof damage, water damage and even structural collapse. Of concern now are structures that may have been weakened last year and may be at risk this winter. This is a serious exposure that can result not only in property loss but also in injury or death.

The following Loss Control Advisories are available on the MMA website.

- Preventing Roof Collapse: Ice and Snow Accumulation on Roofs.
- Roof Inspection and Maintenance
- Roof Collapse Warning
- OSHA – Falls and Other Hazards to Workers Removing Snow from Rooftops and Other Elevated Surfaces

www.memun.org/InsuranceServices/RiskManagementServices/LossControl/LossControlAdvisories.aspx

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Slips, trips and falls are a major challenge for safety professionals. Not only are they responsible for 25 percent of all occupational injuries that require time off from work, but they’re also notoriously difficult to solve.

So how do you reduce the number of slips, trips and falls in the workplace? To answer that question, you need to know what causes them in the first place — and it’s not what you think.

Most traditional solutions to slips, trips and falls focus on physical factors like wet floors, tripping hazards and walking speed. There are three major ways of dealing with the physical causes of slips, trips and falls:

- Regular maintenance
- Rules and procedures, and
- Proper equipment and guards

Establishing detailed housekeeping procedures and then providing products like anti-slip cleaning products and high-traction mats will go a long way toward helping keep your workers on their feet.

But slip, trip and fall incidents are still prevalent despite these solutions being widely available. And you don’t even need an external trip hazard to fall – people trip over their own feet all the time.

In addition to physical factors, there’s another major contributor to slips, trips and falls: human factors. These include:

- Distraction (like texting while walking)
- Walking too quickly, and
- Not looking where you’re walking

These are best addressed with human factors training that builds and reinforces important habits, such as maintaining a safe walking speed, approaching blind corners cautiously, and keeping an eye out for trip hazards. Proper human factors training should address distraction and give workers the wherewithal to stay focused on where they’re walking.

The most comprehensive solution to slips, trips and falls is combining physical solutions with human factors training. A well-rounded approach will help you drastically cut down on how often your employees are injured by a same-level fall, and the human factors training will provide spillover benefits to other areas of your safety program, too.

**Extension Cords: Expanded Hazards**

Extension cords are commonly used in office and shop settings on a daily basis. It is easy to overlook their maintenance, condition and the rules for their proper use. Improperly used or poorly maintained extension cords can cause serious injury or be the cause of a destructive fire. Remember these safety tips when using an extension cord:

- Extension cords are intended for temporary use only. They are not a substitute for fixed electrical wiring.
- Know which type of extension cord to use for a specific purpose.
- Plug extension cords directly into the wall outlets and avoid daisy chains.
- Do not run extension cords through doorways or hole in walls, and do not cover with rugs.
- Avoid kinking or excessive bending of the extension cord to prevent damage which may cause an electrical hazard. Discard all damaged cords.
- Arrange cords so they do not create a tripping hazard and pick them up when they are not in use.

**The most popular car color in Maine this winter is...**

- White Snow.
- Black Ice.
- Grey Sleet.

Maine Municipal Association Online University wants you to be safe! That’s why our featured course this month is: WINTER DRIVING SAFETY

Take 60 minutes to learn driving techniques for adverse winter weather conditions.

Topics include defensive driving, accident prevention methods, the impact of drinking and driving, vehicle safety measures, personal safety considerations, and actions to take for breakdowns or accidents.

For more information please contact the Loss Control Department at (800) 590-5583.