RMS Awards Safety Grants

The Maine Municipal Association has been awarding safety grants to members of their Workers Compensation Fund since 1999. The grant program has assisted municipalities by bestowing over $2,000,000 to their safety programs through the funding of Safety Enhancement Grants and Scholarship Grants.

The Safety Enhancement Grant and Scholarship Grant Programs offer financial incentives to members of the Maine Municipal Association Workers Compensation Fund. Safety Enhancement Grants are used to purchase safety equipment or services that assist in reducing the frequency and severity of workplace injuries. Ed MacDonald, Loss Control Manager for Maine Municipal Association, advises that the program received 131 applications for the May 2011 grant period, and that $151,031.52 was awarded to 104 Members of the Workers Compensation Fund.

The Grant Recipients have put their funds to use by purchasing such equipment as Gas Detectors, Ergonomics Devices, Lockout / Tagout Station, Training Aids, Material Handling Equipment, as well as Traffic Control Signage to assist in reducing the frequency and severity of workplace injuries. For a full listing of grant recipients and the equipment to be purchased, please see the RMS website. Grants are awarded in May and October of each year. To be eligible for the May awards, your application must be received between October 1 and April 30. Applications for the October awards must be received between May 1 and September 30.

For more information about any of the Maine Municipal Association Risk Management Service programs, including Safety Enhancement Grants eligibility and applications, please visit our website at www.memun.org and click on the Risk Management Services link, or call us at 1-800-590-5583.

Risk Management Services at the 2011 “Highway Congress”

On June 2, 2011 the Risk Management Services (RMS) Loss Control Department staffed a booth at the MCAPWA 20th Annual Highway Congress. RMS participates in this event annually as one of the six “Time Out for Training” stations that are located throughout the Skowhegan Fairgrounds.

The training station topic provided by RMS Loss Control staff focused on “Distracted Driving” and featured informational displays, a participant quiz and a drawing. The lucky winners of our drawing for a “Bag of Stuff” were Orrin Parker of Warren and Ryan Bradstreet from Winslow.

In spite of the rain and wind the booth had many visitors. As always, we enjoy participating in the Annual MCAPWA Highway Congress and seeing all of the municipal employees who are in attendance.
One is the Loneliest Number

It’s true that there is safety in numbers, and lone workers can be at greater risk for accident or injury. Who is a lone worker? As a general rule, a lone worker is anyone who cannot be seen or heard by others while doing his or her job and who does not expect contact with any other person. The lone worker can be an office worker in a storage room, a landfill attendant, a custodian cleaning the school in the evening or a plow truck driver. In order to protect these workers, employers need to assess both the job being performed and the worker assigned to the job, and a check-in method should be established to ensure the safety of the remote worker.

**Assess the Job**

Some points to consider when assessing the job include the following:

1) How long will the employee be working alone? Determining what is a reasonable length of time for the employee to be alone will vary depending on the job, the time of day, weather conditions if the employee will be outdoors, and other conditions that may affect the outcome.

2) What forms of communication are available? Decide if voice communication is suitable for check-in procedure or whether a visual check is required. Make sure that the chosen method of communication will work at all times (i.e., check cell phone service areas, provide spare batteries or chargers for radios, etc.). If the communication system is located in a vehicle, consider using an alternative method when the employee is away from the vehicle.

3) Where is the job located? Even a rarely used storage room can be considered remote or isolated. If transportation is required to reach the job location, the vehicle needs adequate emergency supplies and a first aid kit. Consider whether the employee needs emergency supplies and a first aid kit that can be carried away from the vehicle. Make sure the employee has adequate training to handle situations such as vehicle break down, a flat tire, and extreme weather conditions.

4) What is the nature of the work? Make certain the employee has adequate training and experience to complete the job alone. The employee must have access to appropriate personal protective equipment. If working outdoors, the employee should be fully prepared for weather conditions with proper clothing. Machinery, tools or equipment should be in good working order and inspected regularly. Is there risk of animal attack, insect bite (allergic reaction), etc? Is fatigue likely to be a factor?

**Establish the Check-In Procedure**

Any employee working alone should be subject to a check-in procedure to ensure their safety. Even if the employee is only going to be out of contact for a short period, a co-worker or supervisor should be able to verify where the lone worker is located, when they left and when they are expected to return from the job. The frequency and method of employee check-in depends upon your analysis of the job hazards and what you consider a reasonable time for the remote worker to be alone.

For most workers, a periodic phone/radio call to or from a contact person will suffice. For some, a simple voice check-in will be adequate; for others, a visual check-in is necessary. Your check-in procedure should designate a contact person at specific times and include a back-up contact person. You may also wish to create a written record of contacts.

**Assess the Worker**

As an employer, you need to consider the individual being considered for remote work and determine whether they possess the skills and training needed to successfully and safely complete the job. Depending on the nature of the job, the employee may be expected to possess first aid skills, outdoor survival skills and/or vehicle repair skills.

**Lone Worker Responsibilities**

The lone worker also must take responsibility for his or her personal safety. Lone workers are also responsible for promptly reporting any accidents, injuries, near misses or other dangerous occurrences. Without this information, it is difficult for the employer to conduct a realistic risk assessment and to put necessary safety procedures and...
ACCIDENT INSURANCE FOR VOLUNTEERS

*ENHANCED COVERAGE AT A LOWER COST*

Maine Municipal Association Risk Management Services is excited to announce that the Accident Insurance for Volunteers (AIV) coverage is available with enhanced benefits. The program is now offered through The Hartford Life Insurance Company; effective July 1, 2011. The program provides increased coverage limits of $50,000 for accidental medical expenses at a reduced premium of only $2.50 per volunteer. Last year 75 members participated in this MMA sponsored program, providing excess medical coverage to 4912 volunteers.

If you have any questions with Accident Insurance for Volunteers (AIV) or the Volunteer Firefighter Blanket Accident Program (VFF), please contact Judy Doore jdoore@memun.org or 1-800-590-5583, ext. 2255
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precautions in place.

In summary, employers must provide for the safety of lone workers by giving some thought to the general definition of working alone, analyzing the tasks, inherent hazards and equipment involved, and then, at a minimum, establishing a check-in procedure. Keep in mind that the nature, frequency and method of check-in may need adjustment depending on changing job tasks and circumstances such as location and weather. Consider the vehicle being used by the remote worker, and think about the person who will be working alone. Your forethought and planning will help ensure the safety of your lone worker.

Robert McNeally Jr. CSP has joined the Loss Control Department as Senior Loss Control Consultant. Robert, a certified safety professional with a BS in Industrial Engineering and Technology has more than twenty-two years loss control consulting experience. He will provide consulting services to participating members of the Property and Casualty Pool and the Workers Compensation Fund in northern and “downeast” Maine. Robert resides in Patten.

Jonathan Hachey has joined the Loss Control Department as Loss Control Technician. Jon has a BFA from the University of Maine in Farmington and more than ten years experience in administration and customer support. Jon will provide technical support services to members and for the Loss Control staff and will be directly involved in the administration of our safety grant and scholarship programs and the web based online training resource.

In an effort to show our appreciation to municipalities participating in the MMA P&C Pool and the MMA WC Fund, Risk Management Services along with members of the Executive committee have sponsored regional recognition dinners. Municipal officials who attended the dinners were entered in a door prize drawing for a complimentary registration and hotel accommodations for this year’s MMA Convention. We would like to congratulate the following officials who won:

Patricia Ellis, Clerk – Dallas Plantation (Dover-Foxcroft region)
Angela Beckwith, Selectperson – Town of Perham (Farmington region)
Ray Bishop, Fire Chief – Town of Limerick (York County region)

Planning for the September & October Recognition Dinners are underway as we look forward to showing our appreciation for your continued membership.

Welcome New Members!

Property & Casualty Pool:
Auburn Water District
Auburn Sewerage District
Town of West Bath
Town of Phippsburg
Lower Kennebec Region School Unit 1

Unemployment Compensation Fund:
Town of Newcastle

Workers Compensation Fund:
The Forks Plantation

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