

LOSS CONTROL SERVICES & STAFF

As consultants to their 19 member school districts, the ESD 123 Loss Control Staff focuses on building a risk management environment among the staff at the school districts. The Trust's overall loss control goal is to assist member districts in reducing their exposure to the risk of loss and employee injuries through the following services:

1. Claims analysis and prevention strategies
2. WISHA compliance and employee safety programs
3. District on-site safety consultations
4. Safety seminars and training
5. Loss control newsletters

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PASCO

FOR WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMS MATTERS

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DELIVERING COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS THAT PROMOTE LEARNING.

FALL 2008

Safety Sense

It's that time of year!

Dear Friends:

A year ago I wrote to you of an experience where the shelter of a bridge was a welcomed respite from the wintery blast of November. In this session it is again time to provide for winter travels whether by car or by foot.

Supply your vehicle with winter provisions including safety items. We don't have to be reminded that the days are shorter. We don't always remember that in addition to traction devices, blankets, gloves and such that flashlights must work.

While safety devices may help you from getting stuck, they don't always stop the vehicle more quickly. Allow for wintery conditions.

Allow for extra time to get to where you are going.

Prepare your vehicle so that you may

avoid breakdowns and thus exposure.

Wear good winter shoes that are warm and have great traction. As a rule of fact, slips and falls increase greatly when the first ice storm comes our way.

While we have an interest in the provision for safe actions for all employees, we also feel a responsibility for you when you are not at work. While this season is dreaded by the non-skiers and outdoor enthusiasts, preparation can make the season far more enjoyable. Additionally, my hope is that your holiday season is memorable.



Bruce Hawkins, Superintendent

Do I really need to need to fill this out?

The importance of the employee incident report

The Employee Incident Report is used to record any injury or exposure that occurs on the job, regardless of the severity of the incident. Because not all incidents become a workers' compensation claim, this document is vital should the employee require medical attention in the future. The report is also used to gather information for loss prevention purposes. All school districts use the same form, and the forms are available through ESD 112.

Employees are advised that all injuries or exposures are to be immediately reported to their supervisor or the supervisor's designee. The supervisor ensures the employee receives and completes an incident report on a timely basis. Once the report is completed, it is sent to the ESD 112. ESD 112 will keep the report on file in the event the employee seeks medical treatment in the future.

It is important to answer all questions on the incident report. A detailed description of the incident will inform the supervisor of unsafe equipment or work practices. If the injury is due to repetitive motion, a description of that activity will assist in determining if an ergonomic evaluation is needed. Equally important, a detailed description will assist a claims adjuster in matching the injury to the medical documentation that is received.

The Employee Incident Report is sometimes the first notification the workers' compensation section has of an industrial injury or exposure. Accurate completion and timely submission is vital to all parties involved.

Lessons learned from science fair egg drop

The Othello School District had an unfortunate accident at a District elementary school in May 2007 during a Science Fair "Egg Drop" event. The department of Labor and Industries (L&I) investigated the accident for possible violation of work place safety rules. As part of a voluntary agreement between L&I and the District to resolve the investigations, the District agreed to prepare and forward the following news article.

Like many elementary schools in the State, Hiawatha Elementary in the Othello School District conducted a science fair every spring culminating in an "egg

drop" competition. The event involved dropping student designed containers with an egg inside to test whether the container protects the egg from breaking. At Hiawatha, a local utility company and one of its employees assisted in the event by contributing a utility truck with an extendable boom with a worker "bucket" atop. A utility company worker operated the boom from the bucket, accompanied by a teacher who dropped the eggs from a height of approximately 60 feet. The event was traditionally conducted in the parking area with all students, staff and many visitors present.

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Educational Service District 123

3918 West Court Street
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Are you being safe in the parking lot?

Parking lots can be a dangerous place if you are not careful. Slips, trips and falls as people walk to the building or back to their cars are common injuries. There are also other important safety issues to consider. Here are some guidelines to help keep you safe as you arrive to work and leave at the end of the day.

In the morning:

- Park close to an entrance if possible to avoid long walks to your building.
- Park in well lit areas, especially if you are one of the first to arrive each day or plan to work after others have left at night.
- Be aware of your surroundings before you leave your car. If a stranger is near, remain locked in your car or drive away and return after the person has left.
- Close car windows and lock your doors when you leave.
- Don't leave valuable items visible in your

car where they can tempt others.

- Be aware of icy conditions. Wear practical shoes and place your feet carefully.
- Avoid walking into the building with large or hard to carry items. Two trips may be better than one. Ask for assistance or use a cart so you can use your hands and arms for balance.
- Walk in designated walking paths. Avoid walking across grassy or snowy areas that can be slippery in the mornings.

In the evening:

- If possible, schedule your departure from school while it is still light outside.
- Use the buddy system. Plan to work with a co-worker or let another know if you plan to stay late in your classroom.
- Leave with another employee. A custodian might be willing to escort you to your vehicle.

- If you coach students after dark, try to leave with another coach after the students have left. This can also help you avoid being alone with students.

In general:

- Carry a cell phone.
- Be aware of curbs that can be buried under leaves or snow. Watch for loose gravel and other hazardous conditions.
- Let others know where you are and when you are expected elsewhere.
- Trust your senses. If a situation feels unsafe, stay where you are, call for help, or call 911.
- If you are injured be sure to fill out an employee incident report.

Be safe. Stay alert. Chances are you won't get hurt.

Safety meetings: a chance to learn something new!

Safety meetings are an opportunity to communicate how employees can do their jobs safer and better. Topics discussed in safety meetings may be topics that you are familiar with or topics that you have limited knowledge about. If the topic is something that you are familiar with, it may be easy to tune-out and not listen to the safety information presented. Do yourself a big favor and listen to the information as if you have never heard it before. You may just learn something new about the newest personal protective equipment or a smarter way to do your job. Information passed on in a safety meeting has a purpose.

Safety meetings also allow employees an opportunity to relay safety and health concerns or improvement ideas to their supervisors.

Accidents result from unsafe acts or unsafe conditions. For a variety of reasons, unsafe acts typically account for 90% of all accidents, according to some experts. Safety meetings serve as a preventative measure

against unsafe acts by educating employees on how they can do their job safely.

If you are still not sold, let's look at the potential cost of accidents. More specifically, how can accidents directly affect you?

- Death – The ultimate unwanted result. Where does this leave your loved ones?
- Financial cost – Lost pay or reduction in pay. Who pays the bills? Are you the sole income producer in your household?
- Pain and suffering – An obvious detriment that no one desires.
- Disability – A life changing experience. Now you are not able to do what you use to do.

Maybe now you can't cast that fishing rod, ride that bike, hug your spouse, lift your child, or simply see. Or perhaps you are confined to a wheelchair. Good-bye career.

Other than payroll and benefits, workers' compensation insurance and accident costs may represent the bulk of operating expenses.

Perhaps you and your co-worker have

been working together for some time now. Chances are you may spend as much time with your co-workers than possibly your own family. Thus, you obviously do not want something bad to happen to them. Watch out for their safety too.

Safety meetings are a perfect opportunity for you to communicate any safety ideas or concerns that you may have. Participate in your safety meetings. If you don't participate then your ideas will not be heard. Who knows, the idea that you have may very well save your co-workers life or even your own.

Contributed by Midwest Employers Casualty Company, the Trust's Excess Workers' Compensation Carrier

Lessons learned from science fair egg drop

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During the school's Egg Drop on May 31, 2007, however, the boom on the utility truck collapsed due to a mechanical failure while the bucket was being lowered with the power company employee and teacher inside. They fell approximately 30 feet. The teacher was injured, but survived the fall; tragically, the power company employee died from his injuries.

The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries, Division of Occupational Safety and Health, investigated the accident. Based on the investigation, the Department cited the District for violations of the Washington Industrial and Health Safety Act, "WISHA" for failing to require the teacher to wear a safety harness while elevated in the work bucket and to provide employee safety training on the hazards of working on an elevated boom. The District and the Department reached a cooperative resolution for the citation, and both parties desire to share the lessons learned from this incident so that all school districts may continue to provide creative and engaging learning activities that are safe for all participants and spectators.

Those basic lessons are:

- Special school events and learning experiences, like egg drops, remain subject to WISHA employee safety standards regardless of whether they are recurring or are one time only events.
- Districts should include in employee safety policies and training materials, reminders that in planning such events personnel must consider potential safety hazards for staff and conduct them in compliance with all District safety policies and WISHA requirements.
- Even when outside organizations provide equipment or services for special events, the District remains responsible for making sure its employees participate in the activity in compliance with WISHA standards.

Have you ever wondered how the Workers' Compensation Trust is doing?

For the past two school years, the Southeast Workers' Compensation Trust injury rate has stayed relatively the same. For the 2007-2008 school year, the Trust received 220 workers' compensation claims from its 19 member districts.

Here is a summary of who is getting injured and the most frequent causes of these injuries:

WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMS BY JOB POSITION

Position	No. of WC Claims		Percent WC Claims
	2006-07	2007-08	2006-08
Paraprofessional	56	50	24%
Teachers	54	48	23%
Custodian	30	29	13%
Bus Drivers	22	19	9%
Food Service	17	24	9%
Maintenance	14	13	6%
Administration	11	11	5%
Coach	3	9	3%
Secretarial	4	8	3%
All Others	7	6	3%
Library Employee	3	0	1%
Nurse	0	3	1%
TOTAL	221	220	100%

Note: Teacher and Paraeducator injuries have declined by 12% from SY 2006-07 to 2007-08.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMS BY INJURY CAUSE

Injury Cause	No. of WC Claims		Percent WC Claims
	2006-07	2007-08	2006-08
Fall	44	43	20%
Bodily Motion	38	34	16%
Slip/Trip	28	34	14%
Student	28	27	12%
Lifting	27	20	9%
Caught in/Between	7	13	5%
Repetitive Motion	12	8	5%
All Others	37	41	17%
TOTAL	221	220	100%

Note: Slips/trips have increased by 17% from SY 2006-07 to SY 2007-08. In addition, falls and bodily motion injuries continue to account for 38% of all claims.

We also note that the number of time loss injuries has declined by 26% from SY 2006-07 to 2007-08.

Thank you for all your efforts to help reduce the number of employee injuries.

Loss Control Assistance- We partner with you to help prevent employee injuries.

Karen Crawford and Christy Jenkins, ESD 123 loss control staff, will continue to work with districts to recommend specific strategies to reduce employee injuries. To integrate safety into a teacher's and custodian's day, monthly safety talks for staff meetings have been distributed to remind teachers and custodians to practice safe behaviors.