

The Municipal RISK MANAGER

JULY 2011

A Publication of the Maine Municipal Association

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



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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Minimum Driver Training Requirements For Fire Apparatus Have Been Established

The rule was passed by the **Bureau of Labor Standards (BLS)**, Board of Occupational Safety and Health on December 2, 2010 and became effective on March 3, 2011. At present, BLS will identify, but not penalize, departments in non-compliance. The standard will be enforced (with penalty) beginning March, 2012.

This standard identifies the minimum job performance requirements for career and volunteer firefighters who DRIVE fire apparatus, in order to reduce accidents, injuries and loss of fire equipment.

1. ALL Maine fire departments must establish standard operating procedures (SOP) for all fire apparatus. Minimum SOP requirements are listed in the rule.
2. ALL Maine fire departments must establish training programs for apparatus drivers. The rule sets minimum requirements including:
 - Driver's skills must be evaluated **on the operation** of each vehicle they drive using an established evaluation form.

- Skills are to be assessed every 3 years

Individual apparatus driver training records must be maintained for the duration of employment, plus 6 years. BLS will review records during inspections. Apparatus drivers must be approved by the chief.

Maine Bureau of Labor Standard's Workplace Safety and Health Divi-

sion has prepared a CD containing resources to assist with compliance with this rule. Contact them at 207-623-7900.

MMA's Loss Control Department is available to provide a copy of the rule and to assist with or review your SOPs. Please contact your assigned Loss Control Consultant or Loss Control Technician, Jon Hachey, at 1-800-590-5583 or jhachey@memun.org. 🏠

GOOD NEWS: Dividends Approved

We are pleased to announce that the Board of Trustees of the MMA Workers Compensation Fund and the Board of Directors of the MMA Property and Casualty Pool met on May 26th and voted to approve the payment of annual dividends to eligible members of the two programs.

Due to the continued good risk management practices and favorable

loss experience of its members, the Risk Management Services Property & Casualty Pool and Workers Compensation Fund are celebrating the scheduled distribution of \$1.1 million in dividends later this summer. Currently the Workers Compensation Fund has 567 members and the Property & Casualty Pool has 426 members currently participating in the self-insurance programs. 🏠

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

WELCOME NEW LOSS CONTROL STAFF



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.

VISIT RISK MANAGEMENT SERVICES

at the 75th Annual MMA Convention
 October 5 & 6, 2011 at the Augusta Civic Center.

Bring your questions about our programs and enjoy the convention.

We look forward to seeing you there!

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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. 🏠

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