City Safe

A Guide To Assist In Training Employees About:

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Preparing for Spring

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City Safe is a publication of the League of Kansas Municipalities and the Kansas Municipal Insurance Trust for the purpose of educating and informing cities about loss control methods and risk management. Contents herein are not intended to provide specific legal or medical advice. Readers should seek advice on specific concerns from a qualified professional.

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Supervisor's Training Wrap-up

A big thank-you to our host cities, Dodge City, Bonner Springs, Coffeyville and Haysville, for being such gracious hosts for the 2007 KMIT/IMA Supervisor Training. We appreciate their efforts and coordination with the KMIT staff to make these sessions comfortable and valuable. (Don't forget what Marcia said about those stackable chairs!)

We had nearly 200 participants in these sessions. It is always a treat to go out and meet the staff that is the first point of contact when there is a claim or injury. We tried to make the afternoon informative and enjoyable, but admit that there is a lot of information that is given to you in a short amount of time. Take another look at your handouts in a week or so to refresh and reinforce the topics covered. If you have any questions please call the presenter, their number is in the packet.

The theme for this City Safe is shaking off winter and getting ready for spring. Every city department faces challenges during these transitional times of the year. City street crews are patching and assessing the damage the harsh winter caused the streets. For them, there is an article on roadside safety. Parks crews begin the preparation of the parks for spring and summer use. There is an article on the safe use of fertilizers and pesticides to remind them to use the appropriate personal protective gear. Public safety employees face seasonal challenges with wind and rain. We have included a brief article on safe driving tips for driving in the rain. The 2005 annual report on Firefighting Fatalities from the U.S. Fire Administration gives us some insights as to what are the sources and causes of firefighter deaths. Finally, those of us who spend too much time at our desks and are feeling guilty about those extra holiday pounds, there is an article on safe exercising and beginning an exercise program.

It has been a cold winter and we are all ready for spring. Let's just remember to be safe and enjoy an injury-free spring and summer.

Develop a safe exercise program

An exercise program, if conducted properly, will increase your energy level, reduce stress, help you fight disease, and allow you a better night's sleep. Consider these suggestions from the National Safety Council to help you develop a safe exercise program.

- Begin your program by evaluating your current fitness level.

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- If you are under the age of 35, in good health and are relatively active, it may be fairly safe to embark on an exercise program on your own. If you are over 35 or a smoker, you may want to consult a physician before starting a program.
- Gradually ease into your regimen, particularly if you have not exercised on a regular basis for some time. Set reasonable goals and monitor your progress—being careful not to do too much too soon. Listen to your body; it will tell you if you are overextending yourself.
- A well-rounded workout should include exercises that address five fitness areas: muscle strength, muscle endurance, flexibility, weight control, and cardiovascular endurance.
- Weight lifting and other resistance exercises help to build muscle strength. Stretching exercises increase flexibility. Aerobic exercises such as dancing, jogging, or swimming, will develop muscle and cardio vascular endurance as well as aid weight loss.
- Always begin your workout with a warm up and end with a cool down.

Taking time for exercise is a smart investment in a healthy body and a healthy mind!

Are You In "Safety Shape?"

Safety on the aerobics floor is an important topic, one your body will appreciate. The National Safety Council offers the following suggestions to keep your body in "safety shape."

- Not all instructors are certified to teach. The acronyms IDEA, AFAA, and ACSM verify that an aerobics instructor has completed exercise and aerobics courses and has passed an exam. Find out if your health club hires instructors with these credentials.
- Look at the flooring. Veneer flooring is least desirable, and it's hard to move around on carpeting. Wood flooring with spring to it is best. Be sure the surface isn't slippery since you can fall easily.
- Footwear is key. A dedicated aerobics participant could easily replace shoes every two or three months. A good shoe needs proper heel and mid-foot support. Otherwise, you could develop painful "shin splints," sprain your ankle, or twist a foot. You need an aerobics shoe just as you would a tennis shoe or a running shoe. When you run, for instance, your foot lands "heel, toe," But in aerobics, your foot lands "toe, heel." So the support is different, and, as a result, the width of the sole needs to be appropriate for the activity.

FACTOID: Repetitive-Motion Injuries

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2005 **nearly 40%** of employees with repetitive-motion injuries (such as carpal tunnel syndrome) **missed more than 31 days** as a result (www.bls.org).

The American Physical Therapy Association recommends breaks, good posture, exercise, proper techniques, use of protective equipment, and properly-designed work stations as measures to prevent repetitive-motion problems (www.apta.org).

Our KMIT cities have had quite a number of claims involving repetitive-motion injuries over the past several years, especially carpal tunnel. These are painful and *real*, and ***expensive*** injuries, which often result in much lost work time.

Using Fertilizer and Pesticides Safely

Fertilizers and pesticides help prevent unwanted weeds, insects, rodents, fungus, and diseases. These chemicals must also be handled with care to reduce potential worker exposure.

- Always read packaging labels. All chemicals include information on the proper use of the chemical; its proper handling, safe storage, and first aid information.
- Obtain Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for the chemicals that you use. MSDS contain additional health hazard data, spill or leak procedures, and handling information. Be sure to keep a set separate from the storage area.
- Have on hand and wear the personal protective equipment (PPE) required by the label. These can include: chemical-resistant gloves, coveralls, boots, hat and apron, approved respirator with cartridges for pesti cides, and chemical protection goggles and face shield.
- Keep chemicals in storage areas that can be locked to keep bystanders and children out. Be sure to label the storage area as containing pesticides.
- Launder chemical-soiled clothing separately from other laundry and triple rinse.

Inspection

- Are all chemicals properly labeled?
- Are all chemicals in a locked storage area?
- Is correct PPE available and used?
- Are MSDS maintained on all chemicals?
- Is application equipment operating properly?
- Is the mixing/loading area on concrete?

Information supplied by the National Safety Council's Agricultural Division.

Pesticides
Where Are They Found?

Pesticides are potential hazards in many buildings because they are widely used to reduce many household pests, including those associated with indoor plants, pets, and wood and woolen products, and because they are tracked in from the outdoors. Pesticides used in and around the home include products to control insects (insecticides), termites (termiticides), rodents (rodenticides), fungi (fungicides), and microbes (disinfectants). They are sold as sprays, powders, crystals, balls, and foggers. Pesticides are produced specifically because they are toxic to specific organisms. Consequently, they have risks as well as benefits, and it is important to use them properly.

Surveys show that 75% of homes in the United States use at least one pesticide product indoors per year. Those most often used are insecticides and disinfectants.

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However, studies suggest that 80 to 90% of exposures to pesticides occur indoors and that measurable levels of up to a dozen pesticides have been found in the air inside homes. The reason for this discrepancy is pesticides can get into the air in homes from other sources, including contaminated soil or dust that floats or is tracked in from the outside, stored pesticide containers, and household surfaces that collect and then release fumes from the pesticides.

What Are the Health Effects?

The health effects associated with pesticide exposure can include irritation to the eyes, nose, and throat; damage to the central nervous system and kidneys; and for some, an increased risk of cancer. Exposure to high levels of cyclodiene pesticides, usually due to misapplication, may cause headaches, dizziness, muscle twitching, weakness, tingling sensation, and nausea. Some believe these pesticides might cause long-term damage to the central nervous system and the liver. Since the main ingredients in pesticides can be organic, they can also affect vision and memory.

In 2000, the **American Association of Poison Control Centers** reported that more than 1,294,000 children, 12 years old and younger, were involved in common household pesticide poisonings or exposures. In households with children, almost one-half stored at least one pesticide product within reach of the children.

How Can You Reduce Exposure to Pesticides in Your Home?

To reduce risks when you are using pesticides, take these precautions:

- Buy only legally sold EPA-registered pesticides.
- Reread the directions on the label each time you use the pesticide and follow the directions carefully. Use only the amount directed, at the time and under the conditions specified, and for the purpose listed.
- Use nonchemical methods of pest control when possible.
- Identify the pest and use a pesticide targeted for that pest.
- Ventilate the area during and after pesticide use.
- Dispose of unused pesticides safely.
- Anyone considering the use of a pest control company should receive satisfactory answers to questions about the company's track record, insurance coverage, licenses, affiliation to professional pest control associations, and the proposed treatment. Questions regarding pesticide use and safety may be referred to the **National Pesticide Information Center** at (800) 858-PEST.

Firefighter Fatalities in 2005

Each year, the U.S. Fire Administration prepares a report entitled "Firefighter Fatalities in the United States". The most recent available is the 2005 version. This report offers a wealth of information about each incident and its cause. Sadly, 115 firefighters lost their lives in 2005 in the line of duty.

Perhaps one of the most interesting statistics is that volunteer firefighters accounted for 70% of the fatalities. Seventy-one of the 81 volunteer firefighters who lost their lives in 2005 were members of municipal or rural fire departments. The remaining 10 were members of woodland fire agencies. A further breakdown of the volunteer firefighter fatalities shows that 20 came from suburban/urban areas and 51 came from rural departments.

These numbers are surprising and raise a number of questions about safety and training for smaller rural fire departments. The two greatest sources of fatalities in volunteer fire departments were responding or returning from incidents and fireground operations. Each category accounted for 17 deaths. According to the report for all firefighting fatalities, stress and overexertion were the primary cause of deaths at the scene of the fire while vehicle crashes was second.

KMIT encourages our member cities with volunteer departments to look at their procedures and operations to minimize the risks from these two areas.

Fitness

Firefighting is an activity that pushes someone to perform far outside of the usual things we all do. The urgency of suppressing the fire, protecting surrounding property, and saving lives while carrying the weight of protective equipment increases heart rates and can push someone into a danger zone.

Does your department have a fitness or wellness program as a part of your training program? Is your department conducting annual physicals that measure performance under stress?

Responding to Emergencies

Our roadways represent the other most dangerous area for volunteer firefighters. The same urgency and desire to respond quickly to a fire or medical emergency can work against safe or defensive driving skills. It can appear to narrow focus and awareness to the point where the driver of the emergency vehicle, either the fire departments or their personal vehicle, does not see and react to hazards such as other drivers and road conditions.

Does your department have strict policies for drivers when responding to emergencies? Are those procedures reviewed and reinforced? Does your department conduct an annual review of driving records to see if someone is having a problem with accidents or safety in their personal vehicle? Do you conduct a post-accident review and determine what training or counseling might be in order?

KMIT hopes that we never have a firefighter fatality. As with all safety, it starts with a well-thought out program and continued training and review.

Roadway Work Zone Safety

In 2003, there were 1,028 people killed and 40,637 people injured in work zone crashes. Compared to 2002, work zone fatalities and injuries decreased 13% and 22%, respectively. Of the 1,028 people killed in work zones, 862 were in construction zones, 79 were in maintenance zones, 21 were in utility zones, and 66 were in an unknown type of work zone.

We all are responsible for driving, walking, and biking safely through work zones. The engineers and planners have the responsibility to make sure the work zone is designed and operating properly — with safety in mind. Drivers and pedestrians have the responsibility to always be alert and obey the traffic laws. The police and the courts have the responsibility to make sure that the traffic and work zone laws are enforced. Public safety agencies have the responsibility of responding to and securing crash locations and enforcing traffic laws. Local communities and county and state governments need to allocate funding for safe roads and increase public awareness about work zone safety. Everyone should take responsibility for work zone safety.

Tips for driving safely in work zones to share with your community!

- **Expect the unexpected** — Normal speed limits may be reduced, traffic lanes may be changed, and people may be working on or near the road.
- **Slow down** — Speeding is one of the major causes of work zone crashes.
- **Don't tailgate** — Keep a safe distance between you and the car ahead of you. The most common crash in a highway work zone is the rear end collision.
- **Keep your distance** — Keep a safe distance between your vehicle and the construction workers and their equipment.
- **Pay attention to the signs** — The warning signs are there to help you and other drivers move safely through the work zone. Observe the posted signs until you see the one that says you've left the work zone.
- **Obey road crew flaggers** — The flagger knows what is best for moving traffic safely in the work zone. A flagger has the same authority as a regulatory sign, so you can be cited for disobeying his or her directions.
- **Stay alert and minimize distractions** — Dedicate your full attention to the roadway and avoid changing radio stations or using cell phones while driving.
- **Keep up with the traffic flow** — Motorists can help maintain traffic flow and posted speeds by merging as soon as possible. Don't drive right up to the lane closure and then try to barge in.
- **Expect delays** — Schedule enough time to drive safely and check radio, TV and websites for traffic information.
- **Be patient and stay calm** — The work zone crew members are working to improve the road and make your future drive better.

This information is in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, and American Road & Transportation Builders Association.

Driving In the Rain

Losing control of your car on wet pavement is a frightening experience. Unfortunately, it can happen unless you take preventive measures.

You can prevent skids by driving slowly and carefully, especially on curves. Steer and brake with a light touch. When you need to stop or slow, do not brake hard or lock the wheels and risk a skid. Maintain mild pressure on the brake pedal.

If you do find yourself in a skid, remain calm, ease your foot off the gas, and carefully steer in the direction you want the front of the car to go. For cars without anti-lock brakes, avoid using your brakes. This procedure, known as "steering into the skid," will bring the back end of your car in line with the front. If your car has ABS, brake firmly as you "steer into the skid."

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