



City Safe

A Guide To Assist In Training
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TRAINING SEASONAL WORKERS: WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

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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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Training Seasonal Workers: Why Is It Important?

By Guest Columnist Bret Glending
City Manager, City of Osawatomie

Every year as cities begin to gear up for the spring and summer months, the issue of hiring seasonal employees becomes key in everyone's mind. The first question you often ask yourselves is, "Do we need seasonal help this year?" (which is almost always answered with a "yes"). Secondly, you likely try to determine how many seasonal employees you are going to hire. This is based on the amount of work you have available. There are several other questions, however, that you should ask yourselves and your potential seasonal employees BEFORE you hire them.

One of these questions is, "Have we hired this individual in the past?" If this individual is a rehire, then what were their responsibilities in the past? How well did they perform their duties? Did they perform them safely? If they did not work safely, why did they not work safely? It is imperative that each city take the time and energy, and expends the resources to train seasonal employees – EVEN IF, they've worked for you in the past. It is not enough to assume that the employee retained any of the safety training they learned last summer. In fact, they likely forgot everything you taught them because they do not perform this type of work, day in and day out. They've probably had school, athletics, and other extracurricular activities going on in their lives, and working safely in their summer job was the farthest thing from their minds, guaranteed.

Also keep in mind, that there are safety videos available to KMIT members, through IMA. If you would like to check one out (free of charge), please contact Kristi McCosh at IMA (kristi.mccosh@imacorp.com). She will provide you with a list of available videos, and assist you with how to borrow them. Or, you may visit www.kmit.net for the list as well.



Bret Glending is the City Manager of the City of Osawatomie. Previously, he served as a Compliance Officer/Agent for KMIT.

Another question that you should consider is this: “Does your city consider past experience with a seasonal employee when hiring?” Obviously, you consider performance, but do you consider safety? You may have hired a very ambitious, hard working person to work on your street crew, or in your parks, but if that ambition comes at the price of safety, do you want to risk having this employee endanger themselves or your full-time employees? We certainly hope not.

In the not-so-distant past, a city, who will remain nameless, hired a seasonal employee who was injured on the job and was off work long enough to collect lost wage benefits. The following season, this individual applied to, and was hired again by the same city. This individual was injured yet again, and was off work long enough to collect lost wage benefits. Is this the type of seasonal employee YOU WANT? Hopefully not. In the end, this individual cost the city far more than the individual provided back to the city.

It is true that many communities struggle to find seasonal help willing to work under “seasonal employee” conditions. We also realize that seasonal employees provide a



KMIT SUPERVISOR TRAINING: Marcia Payne of Shorman Solutions, demonstrates the importance of obtaining specific information about an individual’s possible limitations from a physician during a pre-or post-hire physical exam. Bryan Dunlap, City of Abilene Police Chief, assists during the “Ideal Physical” demonstration.



much needed service to your city because they fill that “labor gap” between the amount of work that needs to get done, and the human resources that cities have to meet that demand. The bottom line is, seasonal employees, in most cities, are a necessity. From a safety and a

subsequent workers' compensation standpoint, however, **TRAINING IS AN EVEN GREATER NECESSITY.**

A third, and very obvious consideration that you should give to your hiring procedures, is whether the individual can perform the jobs that you will be asking them to perform. The individuals you are hiring should be qualified, as well as capable of doing the jobs you are asking them to do. Lifeguards must be excellent swimmers. Street, park and sanitation workers should be capable of meeting the physical requirements of these types of jobs. If you hire the wrong person for the job either unintentionally, or because you simply need to fill the position, then you are risking serious injury to that unqualified worker – it may even lead to death.

Hiring seasonal employees should not be an exercise in "enlistment." Being "ready, willing, and able" are good qualities to have, but what are they ready, willing, and able to do? Are you certain that the individual you've chosen to go mow acres of park land has the mental capacity to be out on a mower all day, with little human interaction? Can they pay attention for that amount of time, and always be aware of their surroundings? The point here is, **EVERYTHING**, even the little things, matter when you're filling these positions.



A fourth and final question isn't really a question, as it is something to remember about what we have discussed to this point. KMIT, along with IMA, just completed a series of trainings on risk management and workers' compensation issues in February/March in Wamego, Osawatomie, Wellington and Ellsworth (if you weren't able to attend one, we're sorry, you **REALLY** missed out; keep your eyes and ears open for the possibility of more in the future). At these seminars, trainers discussed claims management techniques. These techniques begin even before you have a claim.

They begin with hiring the right people for the job. Doing this reduces the risk of a claim before the person even starts working. Next, train the person on the equipment that they will be using and the jobs they will be performing. Teach proper lifting and manual material moving techniques (among others). Here again is a simple way to reduce the risks of a claim before work even begins.

Once work begins, however, keep an eye on your seasonal
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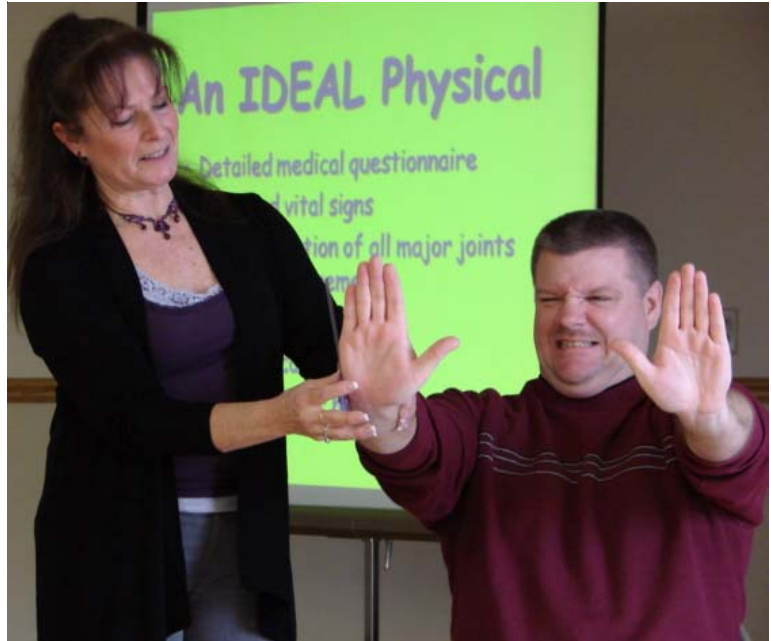
MAJOR FACTORS
IN THE REDUCTION OF
WORK COMP LOSSES...

- **Management SUPPORT**
- **Supervisor EDUCATION**
- **Supervisor AWARENESS**
- **Supervisor COOPERATION**
- **Supervisor COMMITMENT!!**

“Work Comp Management for Supervisors” Training Wraps Up

KMIT extends a big thank you to the cities of Wamego, Osawatomie, Wellington and Ellsworth, for being such gracious hosts for the 2009 KMIT Supervisor Training. We appreciate their efforts and coordination with the KMIT staff to make these sessions comfortable and valuable.

Nearly 140 participants attend KMIT’s training 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. Trainers Victoria Vanderhoof (IMA), Marcia Payne (Shoreman Solutions), and Don Osenbaugh (KMIT) sought to make the afternoon informative and enjoyable, but we are aware that there is a lot of information to absorb 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 a presenter, as their numbers are in the KMIT training packet.



The City of Ellsworth packed a full house for the final stop of the KMIT Supervisor Training Tour. Other cities represented at Ellsworth were Edwardsville, Bennington, Stockton, Concordia, Larned, Abilene, Russell and Lyons. Thanks to the City of Ellsworth for hosting the event! Both the incoming City Administrator, Timothy Vandall, and out-going City Administrator, Jonathan Mitchell, attended the training. Jonathan is now the City Manager in Hoisington, Kansas.

New Employee, New Job - Give a Heads Up On Safety!



So you're the new employee on the job — or maybe you're an old timer starting a new job. Both of you have a responsibility to learn how to do your new job safely. Your supervisor should take the time necessary to explain the safety requirements for the work you will be doing. Here are several safety topics to think about.

First Aid & Emergency: Where is the first aid station located? Where are the first aid supplies? Who is certified to provide first aid? Where are emergency phone numbers posted?

Housekeeping & Sanitation: Where is the waste disposal area? Are there any materials which must be disposed of in a special manner? What are the procedures for daily cleanup? Where is drinking water located?

Personal Protective Equipment: Are hard hats required at this work site? Are soft soled shoes prohibited? Check eye and ear protection requirements. What other kinds of Personal Protective Equipment are needed?

Hand & Power Tools: Are you qualified to use the tools you will be using on this job? Are all the required guards in place? Are your tools properly grounded?

Ladders: Is the ladder the right one for the job? Is it in good condition? Be sure the ladder is properly set up and secured. Always check a ladder prior to using it.

Hazcom: Are you going to have to work with chemicals? Do you understand all of the precautions which must be taken?



As a new or seasoned employee, there are many safety topics that you need to think about. Some other subjects which may be of particular importance on your job are: working around heavy equipment, excavations and trenching, motor vehicles, scaffolds, fall protection and electricity.

As the new guy on the block there is a lot of information that you need to comprehend. If you have a question – **ask!!!**

As a supervisor, you need to be able to answer any questions a new employee may have.





Training Seasonal Workers

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employees. Just like anyone else, they will likely need positive reinforcement of the safety issues surrounding their jobs. Be prepared to take action if positive reinforcement doesn't work. You may need to keep an employee from using certain pieces of equipment (remember labor laws limit this already), transfer the employee to another, less risky area (if available), or terminate the individual if they display an inability to understand and follow safety rules. As the employer, it is your responsibility to keep your employees safe whether they are seasonal workers, or full-time

employees. Reinforce with your supervisors their role in keeping the employees safe.

Understand that a claim can continue LONG AFTER a seasonal employee's work period has ended. You are not released from liability! As was true in the case mentioned previously, the individual was collecting a check, and was no longer an employee of the city. This makes it even more difficult to track the progress of the person's recovery as well as ensure that they are abiding by their restrictions.

Finally, accidents do happen and they often arise out of a series of unforeseen events. If you have an injury to a seasonal worker and it develops into a serious injury, please remember to work closely with KMIT's claims representatives. Your role as an "accident preventer" has now been expanded to include claims manager. You should be staying informed about the status of all of your claims, but it is an absolute must that you stay particularly close to the status of claims relating to seasonal employees, in order to manage claims costs.

KMIT/IMA described in the aforementioned seminars that the cost of claims can spiral out of control without proper management from the city. As your workers' compensation insurance provider, KMIT can only do so much. It is really up to you to be aware of the condition and status of this employee. Maintain contact with them. If possible, bring them to work temporarily with the city so you can more easily maintain contact with the employee. All of these things will assist you in driving down the costs associated with seasonal employees.

Should you have any questions regarding this information, or questions in general, please contact KMIT's Pool Administrator, Don Osenbaugh at: dosenbaugh@cox.net, or by phone at: 316-259-3847. For claims-specific inquiries, contact Victoria Vanderhoof, Claims Adjuster at: victoria.vanderhoof@imacorp.com, or by phone at: 316-266-6347. Beginning April 1, the new claims contact will be Marla Dipman at: marla.dipman@imacorp.com, or by phone at 316-266-6277. Please have a safe and productive Spring!



Attention Supervisors... KMIT Has Something For You!!

KMIT and IMA have teamed up to offer valuable information geared towards supervisors. The KMIT website has a link titled ***KMIT Loss Prevention Training Tools***, which takes you to a wealth of information that you can utilize when holding “toolbox” safety meetings for your employees. Recently, we have added three new additions: ***Lifting Safety, Safe Driving Habits and Safety 101.***

Looking for something and you can't find it? Contact Renee Rhodes with IMA, at renee.rhodes@imacorp.com or, (316) 266-6345 and she can help you find it.

Remember...you can access the *CompControl* and *City Safe* on-line, as well. Each issue contains valuable information to share with your employees...visit www.kmit.net.



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