

COMP CONTROL[®]

The Official KMIT Member Resource

Where Workers Need More Than A Brake

If you use highways, you are probably familiar with highway construction sites. Miles before their cars reach the actual construction area, bright, reflective signs lining the roadsides urge drivers to reduce speeds with the play on words, "Give 'em a brake."

The message on the signs is more than just an attempt at highway humor. Slower speeds can help to limit one of the obvious dangers construction workers face while working near moving traffic—the risk of being hit by passing vehicles. Yet traffic control measures such as trained flagpersons, barricades, and signs are not enough to protect workers from all the dangers of highway construction. Personal protective equipment (PPE) and training on how to use it properly are essential elements in a program to keep highway construction workers as safe as possible.

To determine what types of PPE are needed for a specific construction site, OSHA requires that employers evaluate the site and the jobs performed there. If employers find any "reasonable probability" that an injury could be prevented by using a certain piece of equipment, the employers must furnish that equipment and have the employees use it. Much of the PPE these workers need is the same as that used at any construction site. Basic items such as hard hats and protective footwear should be worn at any site, regardless of its location. The need for other items, such as respirators and fall protection equipment, depends on the job and varies from site to site. Some articles such as reflective safety vests might not be necessary for other construction sites, but they are mandatory for highway construction work.

Head Protection

OSHA requires that employers provide hard hats in "areas where there is a possible danger of head injuries from impact, flying or falling objects, or electrical shock and burns." Electrical shock and burns are not a continual threat at highway construction sites; only some of the jobs performed involve those hazards. But impact injuries from equipment or

by Dana E. Corbin



construction materials and injuries from flying or falling objects present a constant danger.

Head injuries can be caused by a partially completed or unstable structure, a piece of heavy machinery or equipment, or building materials. Working next to moving vehicles makes head protection even more important. Not only do hard hats ensure some head protection if a passing vehicle hits a worker, they also provide protection from road debris injuries. Loose gravel, trash, even shredded truck tires are dangerous to workers. The debris could have been thrown from a passing vehicle or blown into the work zone by the movement of traffic. The same wind that blows roadside debris around can easily knock a hard hat from a worker's head. Hats with breakaway, adjustable chinstraps stay securely attached to prevent this.

Hard hats provide the best protection when worn as intended, with the brim forward to protect the face from falling or flying objects. Hard hats offer some protection from sun exposure, and helmet liners can be added for working in cold weather.

High-Visibility Apparel

A major part of keeping highway workers safe is assuring they are not hit by passing motorists. This starts by making them highly visible, to catch the motorists' attention and ensure no construction workers are inadvertently in their paths.

Wearing light-colored hard hats and adding reflective decals or tape to the hats can increase visibility, but these should be used only in conjunction with other high-visibility items including safety vests. Reflective vests are essential safety gear on highway sites. According to the American National Standards Institute,

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CompControl is a publication of the League of Kansas Municipalities and the Kansas Municipal Insurance Trust distributed for the purpose of educating and informing cities about loss control methods and risk management. If you have any questions concerning KMIT workers compensation or risk management that you would like to see answered in this newsletter, please direct those inquiries to:

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Letter from the Pool Administrator

Dear KMIT Member;

Once again, summer is upon us. And, just as seasons change, there are changes at the League and KMIT that I want to bring to your attention.

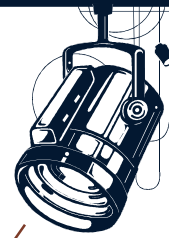
The first is the unexpected resignation of Jane Henry, KMIT Trustee and Officer. Jane, who was the Safety Director for the City of Derby, returned to her home state of Louisiana to be closer to family and to start a new job at Louisiana State University. Jane was a dedicated Trustee for the Pool and had spent nearly four years on the Board at the time of her resignation.

The second change hit a little "closer home" with the resignation of Jennifer Findley, Senior Program Manager, at the League. Jennifer decided to join the Topeka Performing Arts Center as their chief fund-raiser. Most of you are aware that Jennifer played a major role in the day-to-day operations of KMIT. In addition, she was the chair of the State Pool Coalition Group, a consortium of both public and private workers' compensation pools across Kansas.

While we will miss both Jane and Jennifer, we wish them the very best in their new pursuits. For the foreseeable future, your key contact at the League will be Christie Carney, Administrative Assistant. Although Christie currently is involved with the Pool through the monthly member mailings including the CompControl and TeachTools, her responsibilities will certainly increase in the coming months.

Feel free to contact Christie or I whenever you have a question related to KMIT. Be safe this summer and continue to encourage your employees to do likewise. I look forward to seeing many of you this fall at KMIT's annual membership meeting.

Bernie Haven
 Pool Administrator



Spotlight on Keeping Summer Fun

Once again, we are heading into the “good old summertime.” As the weather warms up many of us will be spending more time outdoors. With the extra outdoor activities summer brings, extra precautions will also need to be taken to safeguard ourselves against sun and heat related injuries and illness. To help you enjoy a safe and happy summer, the American Red Cross offers the following safety tips.

Sunburn

To treat a sunburn, cool the skin with wet cloths or water. Seek medical assistance if the burn causes intense pain or swelling. Do not apply ointments without a doctor’s approval.

To reduce the chances of sunburn:

- Avoid sun exposure between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. (when effects of the sun are the most damaging).
- Always use a sunscreen and wear a hat or cap with a brim.

Bug Bites and Stings

Remove an insect stinger from the skin by scraping it away with your fingernail or a plastic card. Wash the area with soap and water. Put an ice cube wrapped in a cloth or paper towel on the sting area to reduce the pain and swelling. Stay alert for allergic reactions including severe swelling, hives, and difficulty in breathing. Seek immediate medical assistance if allergic reactions should occur.

To avoid insect bites and stings during outdoor activities:

- Always wear insect repellent.
- Avoid wearing colognes, perfumes, and aftershaves.
- Learn to recognize harmful insects and their nests.

Heat Stroke and Heat Exhaustion

Heat stroke is a life-threatening condition resulting from exposure to high temperatures. Symptoms include disorientation, loss of consciousness, headache, vomiting, and high body temperature. To treat heat stroke, move the person to a cooler location, apply cool, wet cloths and seek medical assistance immediately.

Although not as critical as heat stroke, heat exhaustion also results from exposure to extremely warm weather. Symptoms may include headache, vomiting, dizziness, fainting, heavy sweating, thirst, and weakness. To treat heat exhaustion, move the person to a cooler area, loosen any constricting clothing and have him or her take sips of cool water to control dehydration.

- When at all possible, stay inside or at least take frequent breaks out of the sun.
- Reduce strenuous activities, especially during the hottest parts of the day.
- Drink plenty of water or other non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic beverages.
- Wear light-weight, light-colored clothing.
- Eat several small, light meals throughout the day.

Bicycle Safety

The following tips can help you avoid bicycle injuries:

- Wear a helmet.
- Avoid falls by keeping an eye out for damaged or uneven pavement.
- Do not pass cars on the right.
- Wear reflective clothing when riding at night.

Where Workers Need....

(continued from page 1)

the reflectivity and brightness of a safety vest should increase with the speed of traffic surrounding the work site. For daytime construction work, brightly colored safety vests with stripes of reflective material usually allow workers to be adequately visible. Construction crews who work at night, however, are safer when provided with 100% reflective safety vests.

High-visibility jackets or coveralls also can be used to increase worker's safety. The "nape protector," thin sections of bright or reflective material attached to the worker's hard hat and hung over the neck, is optional. These add a strip of highly visible reflectivity in an otherwise unnoticed area, while protecting workers from sun exposure.

Footwear

Steel-toed shoes or boots are part of any highway worker's PPE wardrobe. Footwear with thick soles protects against sharp objects and dangerous materials found on construction sites, as well as uncomfortably hot asphalt or other surfaces during summer months.

The workers need safe, secure footing. Shoes or boots with extra traction help employees avoid accidental slips or falls caused by construction materials or wet conditions.

Vision Protection

As with head protection, vision protection for highway workers is about the same as on any other construction job. The workers need protection from dust, flying particles, and various irritants involved in construction. But at highway sites, workers face a higher risk of eye injury from the same roadside dust or debris that can cause a head injury.

Any ANSI-approved eye protection will help limit the dangers of eye injury at highway construction sites. Spectacle-type glasses will work for keeping workers safe, but goggles are more effective if large amounts of dust or flying particles cause a problem. Goggles cover the eyes more completely and stop

irritants entering from the edges. Many manufacturers offer a variety of low profile and comfortable goggles.

For daytime highway construction, employers should consider providing tinted protective eyewear for workers. More than comfort is at work here; tinted spectacles or goggles allow workers to see more clearly in bright sunlight. Avoiding injuries on the job is much easier if workers can clearly see the dangers.

Respiratory Protection

Respirators are necessary if a highway worker's job involves the danger of inhaling particles such as crystalline silica, which is a by-product of various construction activities. Workers can be exposed to these particles through concrete mixing, drilling, or cutting, as well as removing rust or paint from metal surfaces such as bridges. Inhaling crystalline silica particles can cause silicosis, a disease that creates fibrosis or scar tissue on the lungs.

Additional Items

Depending on the site and the jobs performed, employers may need to supply other PPE items. Hearing protection often is required because of hazardous noise levels produced by heavy equipment. Employees will need protective gloves if their hands are exposed to extreme conditions or dangerous materials.

In the end, the most important factors in selecting the proper PPE are task evaluation and employee training. Combining solid training with the right equipment gives highway construction workers the best break from the dangers they face on the job.

Dana E. Corbin, M.A., is an assistant editor of Occupational Health & Safety

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Occupational Health & Safety,
February 2000 issue,
Stevens Publishing Corporation

The following is the Kansas work zone accident statistics for 1999 as reported by the Kansas Department of Transportation

	Fatal Accidents	Persons Killed	Injury Accidents	Persons Injured	Property Damage Only	Total Accidents
In Rural Areas	12	13	182	299	444	638
In Urban Areas	1	1	293	448	695	989
Total	13	14	475	747	1139	1627

Of the 14 persons killed, 13 were motorists. Work zone accidents generally occurred between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. with most accidents taking place between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. The month of June had the most accidents with a total of 191.

Claims

2000 Frequency and Cost Analysis—Top 5 1/1/00 through 5/31/00

By Job Classification

Classification	Frequency	Claim Costs
Police Officers & Drivers	45	\$ 27,096
Waterworks Operators/Drivers	20	\$ 6,630
Street/Road Construction	18	\$ 15,644
Electrical Wiring w/i building	15	\$ 2,805
Garbage, Ashes, Refuse Collectors	14	\$ 8,631

By Accident Type

Type	Frequency	Claim Costs
Strain or injury by lifting, pushing, pulling	44	\$ 22,049
Fall or slip from different level, on ice, liquid/grease	39	\$ 36,742
Cut/puncture/scrape	33	\$ 7,163
Struck or injured by falling or flying object	15	\$ 1,764
Step/strike against object	11	\$ 9,603

By Part of Body

Part of Body	Frequency	Claim Costs
Hand/Finger(s)/Thumb	32	\$ 29,052
Low Back Area	27	\$ 15,154
Knee	21	\$ 4,888
Ankle/Foot	18	\$ 22,174
Shoulder/Upper Arm	14	\$ 32,984

Number of Claims Reported

Monthly April 1, 2000 to April 30, 2000 — 41 claims reported
May 1, 2000 to May 31, 2000 — 34 claims reported

Year-to-Date January 1, 2000 to May 31, 2000 — 187 claims reported

Note—The above figures are based on claims reported as of 5/31/00. The figures are based on actual accident dates, not date reported. Amounts listed for claim costs are amounts incurred to date.

Your Pool in Action

Member Notes

Calendar of Events

July

- National Fireworks Safety Month

August

- 18 KMIT Board Meeting, Wichita

September

- Cold and Flu Campaign
- Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month
- Healthy Aging Month
- Leukemia Awareness Month
- National Cholesterol Education Month

- 18-25 Ulcer Awareness Week
- 23-24 Family Health & Fitness Days

October

- Family Health Month
- Healthy Lung Month
- Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- National Dental Hygiene Month

- 7 KMIT Golf Classic, Topeka
- 10 KMIT Annual Meeting, Topeka
- 8-14 National Fire Prevention Week
- 8-14 National Adult Immunization Awareness Week
- 15-21 National Health Education Week
- 16 World Food Day

Safety *success*

The following cities have not reported any claims in 2000 as of 5/31/00.

Andale	Glasco	Olpe
Basehor	Glen Elder	Oskaloosa
Bel Aire	Greeley	Ozawkie
Beverly	Grenola	Princeton
Bird City	Hillsboro	Ransom
Bison	Holcomb	Sedan
Brewster	Hoxie	Sedgwick
Centralia	Lenora	Tescott
Chautauqua	Lucas	Tonganoxie
Cheney	McFarland	Treece
Conway Springs	Melvern	Turon
Elkhart	Moline	Valley Center
Esbon	Montezuma	Wakefield
Fowler	Mound City	Walton

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Balance Sheet
May 31, 2000

	Assets	
	Cash in Bank	187,622
	Investments	2,032,877
	Total Assets	2,220,499
	Liabilities & Equity	
	Claims Payable	(209,722)
	Reserved for Losses	554,823
	Incurred But Not Reported (IBNR)	1,534,778
	Total Liabilities	1,879,879
	KMIT Equity	340,620
	Total Liabilities and Equity	2,220,499

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