The Road to Developing a Successful Flexibility Program

KEYS TO THE PROGRAM

- Identify the Need for a Program
- Program Research
- Management Support
- Union Support
- Joint Labor/Management Committee
- Program Design
- Employee Training
- Employee Support & Buy-in
- Measuring Program Effectiveness

Identify the Need for a Program

- Overexertion injuries (sprains & strains) #2 injury for District 3.
- Highway maintenance jobs are physically demanding.
- The need to reduce our workers’ compensation costs.

Program Research

- Study of Municipal Firefighters

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Stretcher</th>
<th>Non-Stretcher</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lost Time</td>
<td>$40,587</td>
<td>$147,581</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>$39,775</td>
<td>$87,550</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$80,372</td>
<td>$235,131</td>
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- Mortenson Construction
  - Built new Twins Stadium w/o lost time injury
  - 60% reduction in soft tissue injuries since 1999
- Ryan Construction
- Burlington Northern
- Personal Experience
Management Support

- Open-minded, forward-thinking management team that values workplace safety.
- Management team that supports dedicating time and resources to flexibility program development and implementation.
- Area Maintenance Engineers, Maintenance Superintendents, and Supervisors from each side of the district attended training sessions.
- Supervisors hold employees accountable for performing the stretches twice daily.

Union Support

- The union was notified that a flexibility program was going to be implemented.
- The program was discussed at the labor-management committee meeting, at supervisors’ meetings, and safety meetings.
- The flexibility committee was made up of employees and management.
- The union viewed the flexibility program in a positive light and as an employee benefit.

Joint Labor/Management Committee

- Volunteers were solicited to participate in the committee.
- Four management volunteers were selected and four employee volunteers were selected.
- The committee selected a variety of stretches to make up the program.

Program Design

- All stretching exercises were designed by a physical therapist.
- A variety of stretches were selected to provide benefits for the entire body.
Employee Training

• Visited each truck station and/or sub-area to provide training including:
  – Discussing the benefits of stretching.
  – Completing the stretching exercises with the employees.
  – Provided each truck station with a three ring binder with photos and instructions for each exercise.
  – Program is available on the IHUB.

Employee Support & Buy-In

• Employees have noticed an increase in flexibility.
• Employees are feeling better at the end of the day.
• Improved morale as they view it as a benefit.
• Employees that are physically active when they are off of work look forward to stretching at work.

Measuring Program Effectiveness

• Decrease in number of injuries
• Decrease in the severity of injuries
• Lower workers’ compensation costs
• Increase in morale

Questions?