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Newsletter *Alert*

Director's Column

by Liz Houlding

Just over two years ago, our Safety and Loss Control Program, in partnership with the Interagency Safety and Health Committee, proposed an ambitious workplace injury reduction initiative to our agency's leadership and ultimately the Governor's office.

This initiative, which eventually became known as MnSAFE (Safety Accountability From Everyone), was based on the fact that each year state employees report over 1,800 work injuries resulting in annual direct losses of over \$23 million, which had increased 40 percent between 2006 and 2011 and was projected to grow to \$30 million by FY2016.

Additionally, the statewide workers' compensation claim incident rate (the number of workers' compensation claims per 100 employees) was stagnant, unchanged from 2003-2011. During that same time, workplace injuries for Minnesota's private sector had dropped by about 40 percent.

Clearly, improvement was needed in state government and action was necessary to "turn the curve" on workplace injuries.

MnSAFE required an extensive implementation plan that included the following:

- * Baseline data and trend analysis.
- * Initiative design and development.
- * Three-year 25 percent injury reduction goal.
- * Executive awareness and commitment.
- * Interagency review and support.
- * Governor's Office commitment.
- * Agency leadership commitment.
- * Initiative branding and logo.
- * Website development (mn.gov/mnsafe).
- * Stakeholder awareness presentations.
- * Quarterly metric development and reporting.
- * Communications plan.

I am pleased to announce that this statewide effort is making an impact! The end of FY2013 concluded the second year of the MnSAFE initiative. As a whole, we continue to "turn the curve" on workplace injuries as we achieved our statewide second year MnSAFE goal, a 10 percent reduction from the FY2011 base injury rate.

Additionally, with the goal of reducing injuries, we hoped to simply slow the rate of increase in workers' compensation benefit costs. Instead, I am happy to report that for FY2013 we are preparing to report our first reduction in benefit costs in seven years! While no one is suggesting that MnSAFE is responsible for all of the savings, fewer claims in the pipeline has had to have an impact.

More important than any goal or metric, is the simple fact that there were 341 fewer injuries to state employees in FY2013 than FY2011. That's 341 injuries that didn't disrupt our employees' lives and families, as well as limit our ability to meet the needs of our citizens.

With a strong coordinated statewide effort and impressive results to date, it is not surprising that MnSAFE was chosen to be recognized as a Governor's Continuous Improvement Award recipient.



I would like to thank everyone who has had a role in the MnSAFE initiative; our Safety and Loss Control Program, the Interagency Safety and Health Committee, the Governor's Office, State Agency Leadership, Agency Safety Professionals, and all State Employees who are working more safely.

ON THE FLY...

Information You Should Know *and Share*

- ⇒ The first compliance date for implementation of the revised Hazard Communication Standard (also referred to as GHS) was December 1, 2013. More information is available at <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3642.pdf>.
- ⇒ MnSAFE results for the first quarter of FY2014 are now available online at <http://www.mn.gov/mnsafe/results.html>. MnSAFE is Governor Dayton's statewide workplace injury reduction initiative.
- ⇒ Register with the Consumer Products Safety Commission to receive free email notifications of safety recalls. Go to: <http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Newsroom/Subscribe/>
- ⇒ The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) provides free access online to their standards at: <http://www.nfpa.org/codes-and-standards/free-access>.
- ⇒ Next year's Safety & Loss Control Conference will be held September 30-October 1, 2014. Conference website: <http://mn.gov/mnsafe/conference/index.html>
- ⇒ The Risk Management Fund (RMF) declared a FY2012 dividend (payable in FY2014) totaling \$1,373,913. This is the 11th consecutive year the RMF has paid a dividend.
- ⇒ A new vehicle rental contract has been released by Materials Management Division. The contract is with Enterprise/National (the previous contract holder) and it includes the addition of roadside assistance and maintains the Supplemental Liability Protection of \$2,000,000. See your agency purchasing specialist with questions about the new contract. Refer to RMD's "[Agency guide for determining appropriate vehicle travel options](#)" when trying to determine your best vehicle options for your travel destination.
- ⇒ We can serve our Property & Casualty (P & C) customers best if they include a claim number on all claim correspondence and the agency location (e.g., specific MnSCU campus) on incident reports.

Prompt Reporting of Workers' Compensation Injuries Saves Your Agency Money

by Gary Westman

RMD would like to thank agencies for their efforts in reducing the time it takes for work injuries to be reported.

One tool that seems to be helping with quicker reporting is the new reporting process using iRISK. Currently, over 75 percent of workers' compensation injuries are reported to Risk Management Division (RMD) within three calendar days. RMD has set a goal to meet or exceed the industry best practice of 80 percent of claims reported within three calendar days. Meeting or exceeding this goal will help provide prompt claim service to more injured employees and it will aid in reducing workers' compensation costs for state agencies.

Studies have shown the cost of a claim increases by 9 percent when reported between 4 and 7 days and 20 percent more if reported between 7 and 14 days.

RMD is sharing reporting data with individual agencies so that agencies can track reporting time in their agencies.



Slip Slidin' Away.... Slip Slidin' Away

by Scott Johnson



You know the nearer your destination, the more you're slip slidin' away.

While Paul Simon may not have been literally singing about slipping and falling, it certainly is a fact of life that happens with greater frequency each winter here in the land of 10,000 lakes. Snow, sleet, and mixed precipitation combined with melt and refreeze conditions all do their best to make travel perilous for us. It's once we're "nearer our destination" that our risk of slips and falls increases significantly! As much as it might seem so, slips and falls are not inevitable.

Individuals

Prevention of slips and falls starts with individuals wearing appropriate winter footwear for existing conditions and carrying their dress shoes with them. Because it is impossible to maintain parking lots and sidewalks free of snow and ice at all times, individuals must be diligent as they walk across these surfaces.

Facilities Management

Be sure to periodically inspect parking lots and sidewalks to help prevent accidents before they occur. If there are areas of snow accumulation, a little shoveling or salt might be in order. At entrances, post signs to warn people when the floor gets wet, but don't just leave them there for the winter since they can lose their effectiveness.

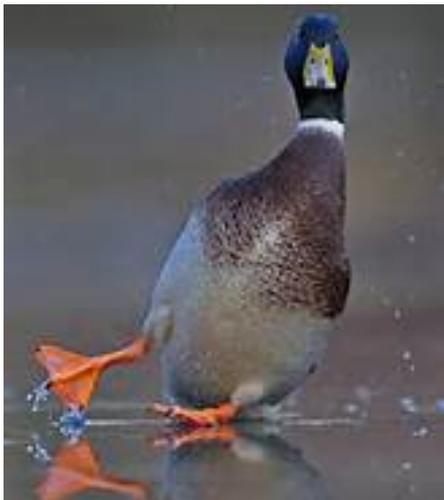
Be aware of your peak traffic time into, and out of, your buildings and parking lots. Be prepared to respond when the weather chooses to coincide with your movement patterns in and out of your buildings. Don't forget to plan for those special events that might occur at your facilities as well.

Watch the walk-off mats at the entrances, and clean as needed. When mats become saturated they create a situation where people will be walking onto the corridors of your building with wet shoes. Some shoe surfaces become highly slippery when wet on certain floor surfaces (think polished floors). Have clean dry mats available to replace saturated mats or extract the water from the mats.

Loss Control

Because slip, trip, falls are one of the most common cause of injury (liability and workers' compensation), it is important to be prepared to react to them when they happen. If this is an employee-related event, follow your workers' compensation reporting process. Be prepared to offer assistance (e.g., provide first aid). Make ready, in advance, to call for assistance when needed. Post phone numbers and make staff aware of what they can do. See if there are actions you can take to protect others – put out additional signs, clean the floor, add a rug. Do not give assurances that medical bills will be taken care of.

Next, document the incident fully. Complete an incident report as soon as possible after the incident. Note the details that are pertinent to the incident, such as the type of footwear worn, weather condition at the time, and exact location of incident. Also, take photos of the condition of the floor. Be sure to get the names of independent witnesses, if there are any. If you have a cell phone that can record your voice, use it to make talking to people easier so that you can get their name, address, phone number, and email address quickly. You can also use these notes to assist you in correctly making a report later on.



Once a slip and fall occurs it is important that you take the event seriously. A fall might create a sense of embarrassment on the day the event occurs. People may not want to create a scene so they may down play the event. The need for medical treatment may occur the next day or even later, and when it does occur people will begin looking for ways to pay the medical bills. If a detailed incident report was not completed, you may find yourself in the awkward position of trying to remember an incident that occurred six months ago or longer. By being prepared, you will appreciate the completeness of the incident report, and your preparation in responding to these incidents will be appreciated by the people who are injured.

Finally, communicate. Tell others that this is important to you, and it should be to them as well. Post your slip, trip, and fall posters in prominent locations by entrances or elevators.

If more people will act responsibly we can prevent some of the accidents that occur.

Check Your Facilities for Recalled Surge Protectors!

by Boyd Abbe

The RMD recently became aware of a safety recall (see “On the Fly” section of this newsletter for how to sign up for recall notices) for specific surge protectors which may present a fire hazard. The [recall is for APC 7 and 8 series Surge Arrest surge protectors](#) manufactured before 2003 by Schneider Electric IT Corp.



We have subsequently learned that some state facilities are finding multiple recalled surge protectors in operation and that following the recommended recall process for replacement is not feasible. To address this issue, RMD contacted Schneider Electric to discuss alternative replacement processes. Schneider has agreed to process bulk recall orders, as long as organizations making requests provide specific information in the form of a spreadsheet.



While the recall notice suggests that the units should be taken out of service immediately, the new procedure will have you inspect all units but not take them out of service until the replacement arrives. You should identify where the units are located (which desk/area) and then look for signs of discoloration due to heating/arcing. If you find a unit that appears to have a problem remove it immediately. If they look normal, simply note the location, model number, and serial number, and continue using it until the replacement arrives.

To receive replacement surge protectors, you must submit: agency contact person, agency name, ship-to address, and the model number and serial number for each individual recalled surge protector.

The following language must also be included in the body of the request: "By submitting, I agree that all information entered was done accurately and truthfully, and that the recalled surge strip will be taken out of service and properly disposed of." Send the request with the attached list of units to: Ian McLean at Ian.McLean@Schneider-Electric.com

The above procedure can be used for bulk orders of 10 or more units. Use the online format to submit your request at <http://recall.apc.com> if you have nine or less units for replacement. Allow up to 12 weeks for the replacements to arrive.

RMD will be contacting insured's with property coverage to verify that the covered facilities have been inspected for the recalled surge protectors and to verify that they've been removed from service. RMD also recommends that organizations share the recall information with employees and encourage them to inspect their homes for the recalled surge protectors. For more information contact Boyd Abbe via phone at 651-201-3011 or by email at boyd.abbe@state.mn.us.

Stay Safe While Driving This Winter!

Courtesy of MN Department of Transportation

MnDOT offers these safe winter driving tips for motorists:

- Turn on your headlights and wear your seat belt
- Turn off your cruise control
- Slow down; allow at least five car lengths between your vehicle and a plow
- Stay behind the snowplow – the road behind a snowplow is safer to drive on
- Watch for snowplows that turn or exit frequently, and often with little warning
- Never drive into a snow cloud
- Check road conditions at www.511mn.org or call 511 before heading out

Pay Attention! Snowplows travel much slower than the posted speeds because it is most effective for clearing roads. The driver's field of vision is severely restricted behind the truck, and the driver must rely on mirrors to see to the rear and side of the truck.

Heavy traffic congestion affects snowplowing operations. If you're stuck in traffic, so are the snowplows. Be patient and drive according to road conditions.

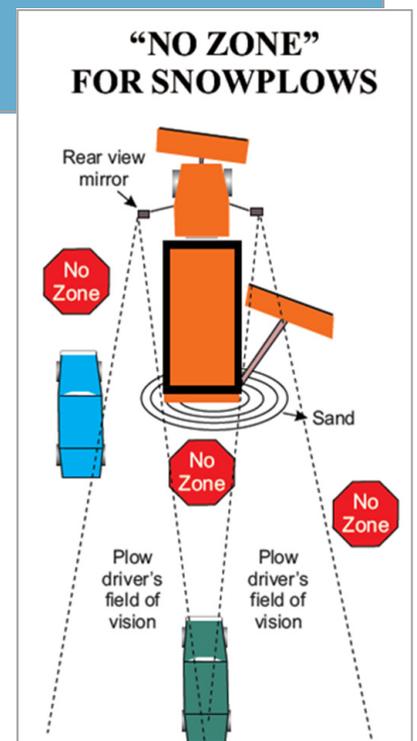


Diagram courtesy of Carol Magurany-Brotski, MN Department of Natural Resources

Safety Poster Contest Winners Unveiled

by Todd Christenson



This past summer, RMD's Safety and Loss Control Program sponsored a statewide Safety Poster Contest. All interested individuals and groups were encouraged to create safety posters that promote desired safe behaviors and that generate awareness regarding the following targeted themes:

- ◆ Back/lifting and material handling.
- ◆ Driving safety/ fleet safety.
- ◆ Office ergonomics.
- ◆ Safety accountability/responsibility.
- ◆ Slip, Trip, Fall (additional walking surface posters or other fall hazards).

Submitted posters were displayed at this year's Safety & Loss Control Conference and conference attendees were asked to vote for their favorite posters by category. The posters receiving the most votes in each category have been published to the MnSAFE website for use statewide.

We would like to thank all individuals/teams that took time to design and submit posters for the contest and recognize our winning poster designers:

- ◆ Tony Becker, Safety Administrator, Minnesota Department of Agriculture.
- ◆ David Bornus, Minnesota Sex Offender Program Policy and Compliance Director, Department of Human Services.
- ◆ Melissa Jensen, Safety Administrator, Department of Corrections, Minnesota Correctional Facility - Shakopee.
- ◆ Erin Lynne, Director of Health and Safety, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, Hennepin Technical College.

Please take a moment to review the new posters that can be found at: <http://mn.gov/MnSAFE/posters.html>, and consider how you might utilize the posters as part of safety management within your organization.

For more information contact Todd Christenson via phone at 651-201-3005 or by email at todd.christenson@state.mn.us.

Auto Survey Discovers Loss Control Opportunities

By Todd Christenson

One of the greatest risks faced each day by organizations and individuals alike is the operation of motor vehicles. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of occupational fatalities in the U.S. and constitute a large exposure to state agencies that operate them and to the RMF that insures them.

RMD took advantage of the FY2014 policy renewal period to conduct an informal survey of auto liability policyholders' loss control activities associated with motor vehicle operation. The survey questions targeted loss control strategies currently recommended in the [Model Fleet Safety Management Standards](#).

The survey results suggest there is work to be done!

- ◆ Less than half of respondents (43 percent) indicated they have a fleet safety policy implemented.
- ◆ Only 26 percent of respondents indicated that their drivers have completed a defensive driving course within the past three years.
- ◆ While 67 percent of respondents indicated they are conducting driver's license record checks on drivers operating fleet vehicles, only 26 percent check driver's license record checks on drivers operating their personal vehicles on state business.



Insureds are reminded that Risk Management Division performs Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) checks as a value-added gratis service on employees operating fleet or personal vehicles while conducting state business. MVRs can be ordered for all states except California, Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Washington, and West Virginia. Individuals with a driver's license from one of these states should contact the proper authorities from their home jurisdiction to obtain a copy of their driving record. Questions regarding MVRs should be directed to Carol Morgan at 651-201-2593 or Carol.Morgan@state.mn.us.

Insureds are encouraged to review their fleet safety policy and incorporate loss control strategies recommended in the [Model Fleet Safety Management Standards](#) and the statewide [Policy on Driver's License and Record Checks](#).

The recent proliferation of hand held technology, coupled with increasing studies and literature regarding distracted driving, suggests an update to the Model Fleet Safety Management Standards is necessary. RMD will be working in the near future with the Fleet Safety Task Force and the Fleet Council to update the Model Fleet Safety Management Standards to address these issues.

For more information contact Todd Christenson via phone at 651-201-3005 or by email at todd.christenson@state.mn.us.

Building Winterization

by Scott Johnson

Here in Minnesota the weather is a constant topic of conversation. In summer it's too hot or too dry. Spring or fall can be too wet or cold or subject to sudden extreme temperature changes. Winter is just too cold or snowy. These are important factors to consider, since each of them can cause damage or problems to buildings and property.

Cold weather, in particular, is a bane to the building envelope. The exterior of a building is designed to keep the cold temperatures out, but windows, doors, and other openings create weaknesses in the building shell. Each year RMD receives and responds to claims of building and property damage resulting from frozen pipes. Here are a few actions you can take to "winterize" your buildings and reduce the risk of frozen pipes.

- ◆ Make sure all exterior openings are properly sealed for the winter. Doors, windows, and other building openings should operate properly, and be closed and insulated if needed.
- ◆ Verify that all exterior vents function correctly. Clear them of debris to be sure they draw properly and that vent covers can open and close correctly.
- ◆ Pipes located along the exterior walls and within the ceiling plenum should be insulated, drained or allowed to have proper ventilation to prevent freezing.
- ◆ On really cold days, open cabinet doors below sinks that are located on outside walls to permit the mixing of heated air.
- ◆ Attic spaces that are infrequently used should be double checked to ensure that all roof entrances are closed and properly insulated so cold temperatures do not permeate areas where water lines, sprinklers, and roof drains are located.
- ◆ During particularly severe cold weather, conduct periodic inspections of unoccupied building spaces, especially on holidays and weekends. Pay special attention to spaces that feel cold.
- ◆ Be hyper attentive to areas where you have noticed problems in the past.
- ◆ Finally, frost and moisture are common on cold glass when the temperatures drop outside or when internal humidity levels rise. Wipe the moisture from the windows. The water can cause damage to the window or surrounding wood or metal surfaces. It can also become a source for potential mold growth.



Some simple steps can usually be taken to reduce the possibility of future damage. By proactively winterizing buildings, the chance of damage to buildings and other property because of frozen pipes is significantly reduced, as is the added inconvenience!

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<http://mn.gov/admin/government/risk/>



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