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# the Informer

A monthly newsletter addressing workplace safety by Iowa Municipalities Workers' Compensation Association.

## National Safety Stand-Down

In 2014 the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) started the National Safety Stand-Down to raise awareness of preventing fall hazards, particularly in construction. This year the event will run from May 2-6. While the target is construction falls all employers are encouraged to participate, and if you do, you may be eligible to receive recognition from OSHA.

A safety stand-down is a voluntary event where employers talk directly to employees about safety. The national event's focus is on fall hazards. If you attended one of IMWCA's Regional Workshops in February you know IMWCA is working to reduce slip and fall injuries. We are taking this opportunity to get members involved in improving their loss experience.

At the National Safety Stand-Down Web site ([www.osha.gov/StopFallsStandDown/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/StopFallsStandDown/index.html)) you'll find a variety of tools to develop a stand-down to fit your organization's needs. Training materials include a fall prevention guide, lesson plan, fall prevention videos for specific hazards, and publications in both English and Spanish. Other tools include toolbox talks and e-tools specific to falls. To get started, look at the poster on the last page of this newsletter!

IMWCA is another great place to look for resources. Our Online University offers many courses ranging from "Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls" to fall protection specific to OSHA standards. Another valuable resource is the

Slip Trip and Fall Handbook available at [www.imwca.org](http://www.imwca.org).

A look at the work we do and the injuries we incur shows why IMWCA is so adamant about slip and fall safety. IMWCA experienced two fatalities in Fiscal Year 2014-2015; both were falls. One was on a road construction site, and the other was from an elevated surface where part of the walkway was removed to raise and lower power equipment. Both fit into the type of work targeted by the stand-down.

Our goal in providing this information in advance is to allow members plenty of time to develop a program for the week of May 2-6, addressing slip and fall risks specific to your operations. When you do, go to the OSHA Web site above and let them know. Employers who provide feedback about their stand-down can download a certificate of participation signed by the Secretary of Labor. And send IMWCA a note--we would like to feature your event in a future issue of the Informer!



## ONLINE UNIVERSITY COURSE HIGHLIGHT

DOT Reasonable Suspicion  
for Drug, Alcohol Testing: The  
Role of the Supervisor

Learn more online  
[www.imwca.org](http://www.imwca.org)

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# Are you ready for spring orientation?

During spring many cities and counties begin hiring seasonal employees for the summer. Once the hiring is done, the job is not complete until the employee has gone through an orientation process.

For returning employees the orientation process can be as simple as providing a reminder of safety procedures and covering any changes to the tasks they have previously performed and training on new procedures or equipment.

For new employees the orientation process should be completed before the employee starts work and should cover general work rules, tasks to be performed, as well as training on procedures and equipment with competency testing.

All of the training, for new and returning employees, should always be documented. To assist with documentation IMWCA has a model orientation checklist at [www.imwca.org](http://www.imwca.org). For training needs, consider using the IMWCA Online University, which can be used individually or as a group.

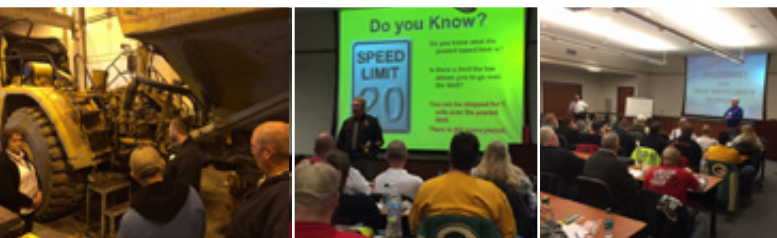
The best time to get an employee to buy into safety is the first day of orientation, making a sound employee orientation process an important step in helping employees return home safe at the end of each day.

## Great attendance at Solid Waste Workshop

A record 41 solid waste professionals attended the AIMWCA Solid Waste Workshop on March 1. IMWCA staff were very pleased with the large turnout and want to thank everyone who attended. We'd also like to thank Ziegler CAT for graciously hosting the event at their facility in Altoona.

The suggestions for this year's range of topics came directly from IMWCA members. Their input provided staff with guidance as to what safety issues are of interest and concern to solid waste agencies and their employees. If you have a suggested topic for next year's Solid Waste Safety Workshop, please forward it to [loss-control@iowaleague.org](mailto:loss-control@iowaleague.org).

Some of the information provided at the workshop can also be found at [www.imwca.org](http://www.imwca.org). Click Loss Control, then Model Programs.



# Wear high visibility clothing

IMWCA wants to remind members about the importance of having applicable employees wear high visibility clothing throughout the year. This becomes even more important as we enter the warmer months of the year and employees become involved in more outdoor activities.

Employers have resources to refer to in understanding what high visibility clothing

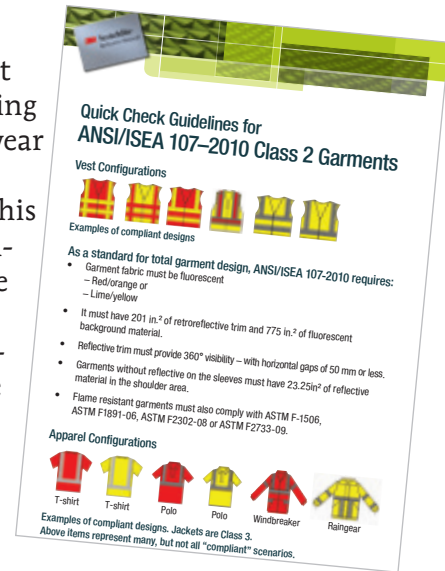
to provide to employees. For those employees working on or near roadways, the Federal Highway Administration's 2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) is an excellent tool.

ANSI/ISEA Standard 107-2015 provide guidance pertaining to what types of high visibility clothing should be used while conducting a wider variety of work activities. For those looking for basic guidance on high visibility apparel, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has developed a brochure to help. A link to this OSHA brochure, "High Visibility Clothing for Heavy and Highway Construction", is at [www.imwca.org](http://www.imwca.org); click Loss Control, then Model Programs. This brochure, although focused on the construction sector, is also applicable to many types of local government operations.

High visibility clothing can include shirts, vests, hats, hard hats, coats, gloves, boots and pants. The type of high visibility clothing that employees wear depends on the type of work they will be performing and whether or not they will be involved with vehicular traffic. Workers involved with streets and roads, water, wastewater, solid waste collection and disposal, utilities, and even parks and conservation can benefit from wearing high visibility clothing. In addition, law enforcement, fire, and EMS should wear high visibility clothing when directing traffic.

Finally, ensure the high visibility clothing your crew uses is maintained. Check the garment tag to determine how many times the item can be cleaned before it becomes unusable. High visibility clothing that becomes too torn, faded, dirty or otherwise soiled should be promptly replaced and the old clothing thrown away.

Remember, wear your high visibility clothing whenever applicable. This simple step can help make sure you get home safe at the end of each day.



## Avoid hazardous reactions to insects, plants, animals

According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America nearly 100 Americans die due to insect allergies each year. Many more will be hospitalized or face serious health issues due to the bites, stings or contact with insects, poisonous plants and animals. Iowa's poisonous insect list includes bees, wasps, ticks, spiders, fleas, lice and chiggers. Iowa also has poisonous plants like poison ivy and wild parsnip. Rattlesnakes are Iowa's only indigenous poisonous animal. To reduce the potential of encounters consider the following safety tips:



- Wear long sleeves and pants when venturing into tallgrass or low hanging trees.
- Secure sleeves and pant legs with tape or a rubber band or place pant legs inside socks to prevent insects from crawling underneath.
- Wear light colored clothing (i.e. tan, khaki) to help spot ticks and to be less attractive to insects such as bees.
- Use insect repellent.
- Spraying clothing instead of the body helps repellent last longer, especially when perspiring, and may prevent an allergic reaction to the repellent.
- When sunscreen is to be used in conjunction with insect repellents or other barrier creams, apply the sunscreen first, and wait at least 30 minutes and apply the secondary cream. It may be necessary to reapply creams throughout the day.
- Wash hands and arms to remove poisonous oils, barrier creams, or other potentially hazardous substances from the skin.

- Be mindful of where your hands and feet are when working in wooded areas or areas prone to harbor snakes, spiders or even poisonous plants.
- Use a stick or other long-handled item to turn rocks over before picking them up to make sure there is no threat.
- Do not wear perfume.
- Avoid exposure to smoke from campfires or clear burning operations where poison ivy exist. Plants such as poison ivy, poison oak, or poison sumac pose a potentially deadly inhalation hazard if the plants are burned.

When bites, stings or exposures occur:

- Seek medical attention, depending on the severity of the incident.
- Do not scratch the affected area.
- Keep the insect, bug, or animal, if possible, in case the medical professional needs it to determine treatment. Be able to provide a description of the animal or insect if the actual body is not available.
- If stung by a wasp or hornet, leave the area immediately to avoid repeat stings. Use a fingernail or object like a credit card to scrape the stinger out.
- If bitten by a snake, stay calm to prevent the venom from traveling faster through the bloodstream, keep the bite area below the level of the heart, perform basic first aid, and immediately obtain emergency medical assistance.
- Watch for allergic reactions, such as hives, nausea, fever or difficulty breathing. If you have a known allergy, carry an Epi pen and ensure those with you know where it's at and how to use it.

Following these basic practices can help you have an enjoyable spring and summer free of the harmful effects of bites, stings and exposures to insects, poisonous plants and animals.

IMWCA Informer is a monthly newsletter published by the Iowa Municipalities Workers' Compensation Association (IMWCA) in cooperation with the Iowa League of Cities. View past issues online at [www.imwca.org](http://www.imwca.org).

Comments or suggestions: contact Bethany Crile, newsletter editor, at (515) 244-7282 or [bethanycrile@iowaleague.org](mailto:bethanycrile@iowaleague.org).

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# National Safety **STAND-DOWN**

TO PREVENT FALLS IN CONSTRUCTION

**MAY 2-6, 2016**

## Stop Falls Stand-Down

- Plan a toolbox talk or other safety activity
- Take a break to talk about how to prevent falls
- Provide training for all workers

For more information:

[www.osha.gov/StopFallsStandDown](http://www.osha.gov/StopFallsStandDown)

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