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# The Informer

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

## Return-to-Work in Crawford County

By Paul J. Assman, P.E., P.L.S., Crawford County Engineer

As the new millennium arrived in 2000, Crawford County found itself experiencing one of the worst workers' compensation experience modification factors in the state. The number and magnitude of work-related injury claims weighed heavy on the work force and strained the budget.

With guidance from IMWCA, Crawford County began implementing change. IMWCA recommended a number of procedural, policy and administrative improvements aimed at reducing work-related injuries and improving management of claims once they occur. While most recommendations were readily implemented, some were looked upon with skepticism. Return-to-Work (RTW) was more or less cast aside as a recommendation that was simply not practical; there just didn't seem to be any "light duty positions" in the Secondary Road Department. We were wrong!

About 5 years ago, after continued frustration with the process of work release for employees, the Crawford County Secondary Road Department adopted a RTW policy in conjunction with a light duty work program.

Essentially the county-designated physician is asked to provide the employee and the county a document explaining work restrictions and the ability to "return to work." This is generally a hand-written script from the physician. If the employee is allowed to return to work with restrictions, Crawford County will work with

the employee to begin their light duty activities as soon as possible. First, however, the employee is required to sign a Temporary/Modified Alternate Duty Agreement form outlining the modified work duties and sign a RTW Agreement acknowledging the temporary nature and conditions of the assignment.

Light duty work assignments have included: updating stop sign inventory, answering phones, running errands for the mechanics, computer data downloading and input, and taking gravel tickets when completing the summer gravel haul. It is important to have a list of "light duty work" items available so employees can be placed in a meaningful assignment as soon as possible.

The current return-to-work efforts are paying dividends as employees generally welcome maintaining their work routine, although limited. In addition, they are returning to their normal work assignments much sooner. The benefit for Crawford County is minimizing lost production and reduced indemnity claims, which both translate to cost savings. As a result of implementing all of the IMWCA recommendations, including RTW, Crawford County now benefits by having one of the lowest experience modification factors in the state.

*Congratulations to Crawford County for their work toward sending employees home safe. And thank you to Paul Assman and Crawford County for sharing their story.*

# NCCI rates for FY 2020

The Iowa Insurance Commissioner approved the rate filing proposed by the National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI), the rate setting organization for Iowa and 37 other states, to be effective July 1, 2019.

The approved filing calls for an average 6.5 percent overall rate decrease for municipal codes used by IMWCA members. The new rates are posted on our website; click "Rates" under Quicklinks. These rates can be used to calculate your premium based on projected payroll in each class code.

The IMWCA Board of Trustees will meet January 24 to review the Discount Rating Plan and Good Experience Bonus Program.



At the November meeting of the IMWCA Board of Trustees, the board and Iowa League of Cities staff celebrated Dean's achievements. Pictured: IMWCA President Jim Dowling, Dean, Director of Risk Services Jeff Hovey.

## Agent training seminar in January

County Risk Management Services (CRMS) announces its second annual educational seminar for all IMWCA and ICAP insurance agents.

The seminar is designed to elevate the level of service and information members receive from their local agent. Plan to attend either event: January 16 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Johnston and January 17 at Boulders Conference Center in Denison. Each seminar will run from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and is free; lunch is included.

Classes have been approved for three hours of continuing education credits through the Iowa Insurance Division. Registration is available at [www.crmisia.com/crms-educational-event](http://www.crmisia.com/crms-educational-event).



## Fire extinguishers and the PASS method

Fire extinguishers are an important part of fire preparedness, and should be available in places with the greatest need for them, such as the garage or kitchen or near a live Christmas tree.

Check your fire extinguishers at least monthly to ensure they are in proper working order. At least once a year, take your fire extinguisher to a professional to be checked and tested.

Before attempting to fight a fire, ensure everyone else is on their way out of the house and that the fire department has been called. Make sure you have your back to a safe exit and the fire is in a confined area. When using a fire extinguisher, remember the PASS method.

If you do not know how to use a fire extinguisher, go to your local fire department for training.

## 30 years with Dean Schade

December 5, 1988, Dean Schade began working for the Iowa League of Cities as a staff associate. In 1991, he became the loss control coordinator and in 1995 was hired as the League's director of governmental affairs. In 1998, he returned to the loss control department to serve IMWCA members.

Congratulations, and a big thank you, to Dean on 30 years of service to the Iowa League of Cities.

If you see Dean on the road, help us thank him for this dedication to Iowa municipalities, or send him a congratulatory note at [deanschade@iowaleague.org](mailto:deanschade@iowaleague.org).

Fire extinguishers are just one part of an overall household fire preparedness program which includes fire alarms/smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and an escape plan. All three are needed to have an effective plan in place.

**P**ull the pin. Keep the nozzle pointing away from you; once the pin is removed, the extinguisher is unlocked and ready for use.

**A**im low. Point the nozzle at the base of the fire.

**S**queeze the handle/lever slowly and evenly.

**S**weep the nozzle from side to side.

## The end of the year means OSHA 300 Forms

Days are shorter and temperatures are dropping, sure signs we're approaching the end of the year. As you get ready to make your list and check it twice, it is important to ensure that Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Recordkeeping is on that list. We're talking about your year-end to-do list, of course.

- Posted by February 1 and remain posted until April 30 at each establishment (location at the employer)
- Posted in areas where other notices are normally placed
- Certified (signed) by a company executive stating that the information is correct and complete to the best of the employer's ability
- If no cases are recorded during the calendar year, the OSHA 300A summary must still be posted with zeros entered into all spaces provided on the form.

3) The OSHA 301 Form, Injury and Illness Incident Report is also known as the first report of injury or illness form.

Rest assured, IMWCA has tools to help you with your OSHA recordkeeping needs. Your phone call to Company Nurse generates your First Report of Injury and meets the OSHA 301 Form requirement.

IMWCA provides a website, RTWNow with a tool called Tracker, IMWCA's online tool that makes OSHA recordkeeping a breeze. With Tracker, your Company Nurse first reports reside in the Tracker database. All you need to do is enter, or "Track" the appropriate activity for each claim, such as days away from work, restricted or modified duty. Tracker has a reporting tool that will build the 300 and 300A, saving time and the chance of data entry error. To learn more visit: [www.imwca.org/AboutIMWCA/services/Pages/ReturnToWorkNow.aspx](http://www.imwca.org/AboutIMWCA/services/Pages/ReturnToWorkNow.aspx).

OSHA recordkeeping requires any employers with 11 or more employees to track reportable injuries on an annual basis. There are three recordkeeping forms required:

1) The OSHA 300 Form, Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses requires the employer to record information about every work-related death, injury or illness that meets OSHA recordkeeping requirements.

2) The OSHA 300A Form, Summary of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses summarizes the information recorded on the 300 log. The annual summary must be:

## Wishing you a joyful & safe holiday season.

Thank you, to each member for your loyalty and commitment to our shared goal of sending everyone home safe at the end of each day.

Our office will be closed December 24 - 25 and January 1, so staff can celebrate the season with family and friends. Claims should still be reported immediately through Company Nurse during this time. Thank you!

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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