

IN THIS ISSUE:

Page

- 2 Payroll worksheets two ways
- 2 Love reading
- 3 Five generations under one roof
- 3 Seeking claims representative

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# The Informer

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

## Getting the most out of safety programs

Written safety programs are at the core of any successful safety program. In addition, many programs are required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), which is probably why safety programs are sometimes referred to as OSHA programs. However, we believe that a written model program is much more than a compliance document.

Some of the previous model programs used by IMWCA, and those used by many consultants, begin by stating that the purpose of the program is compliance with OSHA. However, this format puts more emphasis on the employer not being fined than it does on the safety of employees. All new and revised programs available through IMWCA clearly state that the intent of the program is to protect the employees from a specific exposure.

The goal of any written safety program is not just to have it, but to use it. For practical purposes every program should outline the responsibilities of the employer and the employee, including assigning certain roles to specific people or positions within an organization. While the employer does have a significant role in creating a safe workplace, employees also need to understand that they have an equally significant role. A useful program will

detail that role for each exposure.

Many OSHA programs are 20-30 pages and include definitions and sections that don't pertain to a governmental operation. As a result, the document becomes burdensome, if not intimidating, for employees. The result could be a large compliance document that is never followed. A good safety program is a useful safety program. Aim to create a concise how-to guide for employees, showing what to do for a specific task using 5-7 pages of directions. This becomes the basis of training employees for each exposure.

We also urge members to make any model program specific to individual departments. Each department has unique characteristic in terms of the exposures. For example, both a library and an ambulance crew have potential bloodborne pathogen exposures, but the circumstances for prevention are different. The written safety program for each department needs to identify the procedures for each department, how the procedures will be implemented and by whom.

IMWCA recommends reviewing written safety programs annually and updating as needed, but especially when a change in operations is made. Many employers spend considerable time developing safety procedures, but once the



**IMWCA recently updated many of the written model programs available on our website. Find all the programs under the Loss Control tab at [www.imwca.org](http://www.imwca.org).**

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# Payroll worksheets two ways

Your IMWCA payroll worksheet for the upcoming 2019-2020 policy renewal will be available two ways.

1. Complete it electronically by logging into your Member Login at [www.imwca.org](http://www.imwca.org).
2. It will arrive in your mailbox in mid-February. Please review your worksheet, either electronically or on paper, and indicate any payroll that differs from the estimate.

The deadline to return the worksheet is March 31, so we can record your adjustments and calculate an accurate estimate of your renewal premium. All worksheets should be returned even if no adjustments to the estimates are made.

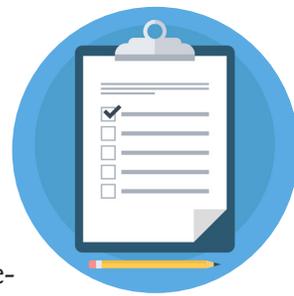
The Estimated Premium Schedule and invoice are generated using the payroll received from each member. Final Estimated Premium Schedules, Information Pages, Experience Modification Worksheets and invoices will be mailed in May.

Contact us at (800) 257-2708 or [imwcainfo@iowaleague.org](mailto:imwcainfo@iowaleague.org) if you do not receive your payroll worksheet, need Member Login information or with any questions.

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programs are adopted they forget about them. A good written safety program is a living document.

Employees are the most valuable resource for any employer. Having clear, concise and up-to-date procedures to address safety exposures is an important way for an employer to show employees the organization and management care about their safety and well-being. Usable and understandable safety programs are also important in helping those employees go home safe at the end of each day.

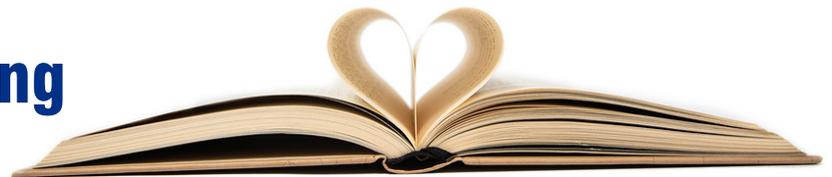


Check out this video, *Safety Procedures Done Better*, on IMWCA's YouTube channel.

Find all IMWCA's written model programs under the Loss Control tab at [www.imwca.org](http://www.imwca.org).



## Love reading



February is National Library Lover's Month. In addition to taking the time to appreciate the school, public and private libraries in your life, now is a great time to pick up a great read.

Although today's public libraries are filled with so much more than books, the many benefits of reading could turn everyone into a library lover.

1. Takes you places.  
Dr. Seuss once wrote, "The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." Enough said.
2. Brain boosting.  
Research published by Neurology in 2013 found that reading regularly may help slow memory decline often associated with aging, keeping minds sharper for longer. Reading exercises the brain, and new studies are showing that might help fight diseases like Alzheimer's.

3. Increased empathy.  
A study published by Science, found that reading fiction books, which generally empower readers to understand what others are thinking or feeling, can improve empathy. Another study published in the Journal of Applied Social Psychology found that students who read books where characters showed tolerance toward people who weren't like them also become more understanding and tolerant of others.
4. Reduce stress.  
Multiple studies have shown that reading can relieve stress better than taking a walk or listening to music. In fact, as little as six minutes of reading each day can have an impact, although at least 30 minutes is recommended.

So stop by your personal library, or head to the nearest public library and show it some love. It will really do you some good.

## Five generations under one roof

The population of the workplace is continually changing. According to a Population Reference Bureau report, Aging in the United States, there were 46 million Americans over the age of 65 in 2016, and the number is expected to grow to 98 million by 2060. This will cause the portion of the workforce 65 and over, in 2060, to grow by 75 percent.



For a variety of reasons people are not retiring as early as in the past. Longer life expectancy, financial situations which are not sufficient to retire, continual satisfaction in remaining employed and productive, and a decline in quality workers in rural areas all pressure experienced workers to remain employed.

Regardless of the reason, the shift has begun. For the first time in his-

tory there are five generations in the workforce. Traditionalist, Baby Boomer, Generation X, Millennial or Generation Y, and Generation Z workers coexist in workplaces across the country. It is time to start paying attention to these changing demographics and realize that the company has a responsibility to adapt to the aging workforce.

Meeting these needs doesn't have to be overly time-consuming or costly. It can be small changes that are specific to the individual worker, including a flexible schedule, job sharing, reverse mentoring or an ergonomic adjustment. It is also important realize that a safe work environment may have a different look for the aging workforce. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the leading cause of death for people over age 65 is due to a fall. Hazard-free workplaces are a must, and the "way we have always done it" doesn't apply. A Job Hazard Analysis is good tool to look at specific job tasks through a lens that recognizes any hazards or safety concerns related to the task.

As the unemployment rate continues to decline and good help is harder to find, make it a priority to utilize the aging talent within.

## Seeking claims representative

IMWCA is looking for a new administrative/claims representative. Under the direction of the claims manager, this person is responsible for assisting the claims department with administrative tasks as well as handling some workers' compensation claims.

This position is an addition to staff. If you're interested in this position, or know someone who should apply, check out the full job posting online, then send resume and cover letter by February 15 to [lisamart@iowaleague.org](mailto:lisamart@iowaleague.org).

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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