

IMLRMA Connections

Summer, 2010

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IMLRMA Connections is a quarterly newsletter published by the IMLRMA to educate member local officials and employees on issues of importance. Contents herein are not intended to provide specific legal or medical advice. Readers should seek advice on specific concerns from qualified professionals.

We welcome your comments or suggestions for future topics or articles. Please contact us via our website at: www.imlrma.org (look for "Send us a comment") or by talking to your Member Field Representative, Member Services, or your Loss Control Specialist.

The first 5 "treasured customers" win a prize!

August 7th is Treasure Your Customers Day.

In honor of that day, we want to send a 'treasure' to the first five (5) people that send us their name/ mailing address via our website at: <http://www.imlrma.org>.



On the front page of our website Home Page is a link to "Send us a comment or question." Just click on the link and send in your name, address where to mail the prize, and we'll send your "treasure" in the mail!

New Features on IMLRMA website!

Check out the new features we've added to the IMLRMA website:

1. **Weekly Safety Wisdom (WSW)** Every Monday morning, a new WSWs will show on our front page. The WSW is a single-topic safety discussion for you to share with your department heads, supervisors, and employees to kick off each week with safety in mind, to use at Safety Committee meetings, to use for discussion with an employee after a preventable near miss, accident, injury or illness, etc.
2. **Safety Tip of the Day Calendar** This monthly calendar provides short safety tips for each workday. The tips may be about work safety or home safety so it can be shared with all of your employees. It also reminds your employees that safety doesn't end with the work week and encourages them to be safe on the weekends.
3. **On the Road with IMLRMA (OTR)** Every Friday morning starting July 2nd, a new OTR will show on our front page. The OTR will range from updates about IMLRMA activities, important news flashes, answers to questions we've encountered, etc.

These items are designed to help you keep safety in the minds of employees. The more often you repeat the message of safety (daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly), the greater the chance that safety will become part of employees' natural thought processes and workday procedures.

We hope you find these tools to be helpful in keeping your employees safe both on the job and off! As with everything we do, we welcome your comments and suggestions!

IMLRMA Resources

July—Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus

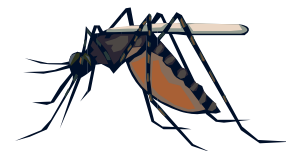
A June 21, 2010 press release from the Illinois Department of Public Health reports that 10 Illinois counties have reported either mosquitoes or birds testing positive for West Nile Virus (WNV) thus far this year. Although most cases of WNV are mild, the virus can cause serious life-altering and even fatal disease. The hot summer could increase mosquito activity and the risk of disease from WNV.

Encourage your employees and their families to remember the “Five D’s” of mosquito avoidance:

- **Dusk until dawn.** Limit time outdoors from dusk until dawn when mosquitoes are most active. If you must be out during these times, take precautions.
- **Drain** standing water where mosquitoes lay eggs.
- **Dress** appropriately—long pants, long-sleeved shirts, a hat, socks. Don’t wear cologne or after-shave or use perfumed soap.
- **Doors and barriers.** Install screen doors and window screens to keep mosquitoes from coming indoors.
- **DEET.** Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of eucalyptus or IR 3535 if you will be outdoors. Follow EPA recommended precautions when using insect repellents.

Watch for the upcoming IMLRMA Weekly Safety Wisdom (WSW) about Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus. Share the information with employees at weekly safety meetings, and encourage them to share the information with their families:

<http://www.imlrma.org>



Additional Resources

Illinois Department of Public Health: http://www.idph.state.il.us/public/press10/6.21.10WNV_NoILMosq.htm

July—Insect Stings

July 10th is Don’t Step on a Bee Day. We’re going to change that around a bit to “Don’t Get Stung by a Bee (or any other insect) Summer!”

Believe it or not, IMLRMA has had to pay Worker’s Compensation claims for employees who have been stung by bees and other insects. It’s likely that your employees who work or play outdoors this summer will encounter bees, wasps, hornets and other stinging insects. While most stings are merely irritating and annoying, for some, they can be deadly.

Make sure your employees (and their families) know how to prevent

stings and what to do in case of a sting.

- Before beginning the work or activity, inspect the area for bees, wasps, etc.
- Wear protective gloves, long sleeves and pants, a hat, and neck protection. Tuck shirts into pants and pull gloves over sleeves.
- Don’t wear scented products.
- Drink from closeable containers.
- Use insect repellent on skin and clothes (but not on skin under clothes).
- Carry a sting allergy emergency kit if you or a family member has had an allergic reaction in the past.
- Train employees what to do and who they should contact if they receive a sting in the course of employment.
- If a bee/wasp lands on you, try to hold still and let it leave on its own. Don’t swat or squish it.
- If stung, remove the stinger by gently scraping it—don’t use tweezers or fingers that may inject more venom.
- Clean the area with soapy water. Relieve swelling with ice.
- Use calamine or similar lotions to relieve itching.
- Take OTC pain relievers and antihistamines as needed.
- Check for signs of infection and get medical attention if needed.
- Get immediate medical attention for multiple stings or anaphylactic reaction.

IMLRMA Resources



Watch for the upcoming IMLRMA Weekly Safety Wisdom (WSW) about Insect Stings for additional information and resources at:

<http://www.imlrma.org>



July — Power Lawn Mower Safety

IMLRMA members use power mowers all summer to maintain their parks, medians, ball fields and other public properties. Power lawn mowers can be dangerous, especially if they're being operated by inexperienced seasonal employees or employees who don't have a concern for safety.

Tips for Power Mower Safety:

Before starting:

- Read and follow all manufacturer instructions, including maintenance requirements, and how to shut off the mower in an emergency situation.
- Train employees who will be operating the equipment how the equipment operates and how to engage its safety features.
- Inspect the mower for unsafe conditions and make sure all shields and safety devices are working properly. Document the inspection and any corrective measure taken.
- Physically inspect the site before mowing and remove any objects that could become projectiles and injure persons or cause property damage. Also look for beehives and poison ivy/oak. Mark fixed objects such as pipes, sprinkler heads, signs, curbing, and utilities that could be damaged or could damage the mower.
- Try to mow public parks and other high traffic areas when traffic volume is the lowest.
- Check the oil and gas, and start the mower outdoors where carbon monoxide can't build up.

While mowing:

- Wear the proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as hearing protection (not MP3 players and headphones!), safety glasses, long pants, gloves, and high visibility clothing if working near traffic. Wear ankle high, good leather work boots. **NO BAREFEET, SANDALS OR SNEAKERS! NO SHORTS!**
- Watch for vehicle and pedestrian traffic so dirt and debris doesn't injure or strike them. Direct the discharge chute away from pedestrians and property.
- Be careful of slopes—mow up and down slopes on riding mowers, and across slopes with walking mowers.
- Don't mow in reverse or walk backwards pulling a mower toward you if it can be avoided.
- Keep hands and feet away from mower blades while the mower is running.
- Never leave a running mower unattended.
- Never refuel a mower while the engine is hot.
- One seat means one rider—no passengers!
- Only mow in daylight or good artificial light.

After mowing:

- Make sure the mower stops before dismounting.
- Inspect the mower for any damage.
- When servicing the mower, always disconnect the spark plug and make sure the engine has cooled.
- Keep the equipment clean.
- Perform routine maintenance and document maintenance schedules.
- Never tamper with or disengage safety devices.

Claims Corner: Water Tower Claims — Don't Let It Happen to Yours!

Two IMLRMA members have experienced nearly identical claims with their water towers and we want to warn all other members about the issue. In both cases, water improperly drained out of the tank at the top painters platform at the top of the column, down the column pipe, and into the bell. All of the equipment in the bell was destroyed and in both cases the hanging cathodic protection system in the vessel was destroyed. In one of the cases, water filled the bell to approximately five feet before the steel door failed. In the other case, 400,000 gallons of water were released!

In these cases, both water towers were constructed by Chicago Bridge & Iron (CB&I) and were Horton Spheroid models. Both were less than 10 years old. However, we're unsure if the problem is limited to this model or age of tower.

In each case, the bottom plug of a cleanout/sand line pipe was improperly installed, with only 1 to 2 threads of the bottom plug engaged, thus allowing the plug to blow out. In addition, the top plug was missing altogether. The pipe in question is approximately 12 inches long and its purpose is to give painters a place to run the hose for their sandblasting/painting equipment. This pipe may not even appear on the drawings that you have for the tower!

In determining whether you need to have your water tower(s) inspected/checked for the same issue, **make sure you use only qualified persons to inspect/check for the issue and make sure that all safety measures are taken when conducting the inspection**

(proper fall protection, confined space entry procedures, etc.).

If you find that the bottom plug is not properly engaged, do NOT attempt to fix the problem at that time. Rather, contact the engineer and contractor that you originally hired to oversee/construct the tower and request that they determine the best way to fix the problem before a claim occurs. You may wish to discuss with your municipal attorney the best way to contact the engineer/contractor to protect your municipal interests.

See the IMLRMA website for pictures of the tower/pipe, etc. in question:

<http://www.imlrma.org>



August



August — National Win with Civility Month

According to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, “civility” means courteous behavior; politeness; and a courteous act or utterance. It seems fitting for Civility Month then to talk about Verbal Judo. The Verbal Judo Institute, a police training and management and consulting firm, was founded by Doc “Rhino” Thompson, a university professor and former police officer. Verbal Judo is about redirecting people’s behavior with words. Originally designed as a tool to help law enforcement de-escalate verbal attacks, Thompson states that Verbal Judo is also valuable in dealing with spouses, children, bosses, employees, students, and customers—in other words, any of your employees!

You can learn more about Verbal Judo, including available trainings and other resources by visiting the Verbal Judo website at <http://verbaljudo.com>, or by buying the book.

Additional Resources

You can sign up to receive a **free weekly** Verbal Judo lesson, something that you can share weekly in safety meetings, staff meetings, etc.: <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/noisehearingconservation/index.html>

August — Keep a Cool Head While Working in Hot Weather!

Work has to get done, even on the hottest days, but knowing the factors that increase the risk of heat-related illnesses and the simple precautions you can take, will keep your employees safe in the heat. Remember, 100% of Heat-Related Illnesses are preventable!

Factors that increase the risk:

- Employees in poor physical condition, have certain illnesses such as head/lung disease or diabetes.
- Not acclimating to working in the heat.
- Inappropriate clothing.
- Not enough fluids, or the right kinds of fluids.

IMLRMA Resources

Watch for upcoming IMLRMA Weekly Safety Wisdom (WSW) on Heat Illnesses. It’s also useful information for your employees to share with their families as the same principles apply when working or playing outdoors in your free time!

Tips for preventing heat-related illnesses:

Employers and Supervisors:

- Allow workers to acclimate to working in the heat.
- Assign the right workers for the job.
- Have employees work at a steady pace and use extra workers to prevent overexertion.
- Schedule hot jobs on cool days or cooler parts of the day.
- Train employees on what signs/symptoms of heat illness to look for and what to do for themselves and co-workers.

Employees:

- Start the day hydrated and drink water steadily to stay hydrated.
- Dress appropriately.
- Watch for signs/symptoms of heat illness in yourself and co-workers.



August—Get Employees Involved in the Safety Process

Getting your employees involved in the safety process is one of the keys to a successful safety program.

Benefits of employee involvement:

- Employees are the most knowledgeable about potential safety and health hazards they face on the job, the stumbling blocks that prevent them from working safely, and solutions for addressing those issues.
- The more brains contributing to ideas and discussions, the better!
- Employees are more likely to support a program they help to create.
- Employees and management working together for a common goal helps improve relations.
- Employees who are listened to and valued have higher morale.

Don't forget to recognize employee efforts by showcasing noteworthy safety achievements and proactive safety measures and thanking the employee(s) responsible. Be careful what you reward though. Rewarding a reduction in number of claims or reports of injuries, for example, can send the wrong message—that it's not o.k. to report a legitimate incident. Instead, recognize positive behaviors—such as implementing a new safety process.

IMLRMA Resources

Read the IMLRMA Today article in the upcoming August IML Review Magazine about the Job Hazard Analysis process and involve your employees in conducting JHAs for your most hazardous jobs!

Don't forget—your IMLRMA Loss Control Specialist can help you with ideas for getting your employees involved in safety! Call your Loss Control Specialist today!

Ways to Involve Employees in the Safety Process

- Get them involved with inspections—of job sites, facilities, special event locations, etc.
- Have them help with Job Hazard Analysis for the jobs they perform.
- Ask them to help create and revise written safety policies and procedures.
- Ask resident “experts” to train newer employees on a particular job, process, or piece of equipment.
- Have employees research a key safety hazard you're municipality is experiencing, including recommendations for addressing the issue and present the topic at a weekly safety meeting or safety committee meeting.
- Allow employees to serve on safety committees and incident investigation teams.
- Have a safety idea suggestion box—and allow the employee to suggest the hazard and solution and implement the idea on a pilot basis.

September

National Preparedness Month

National Preparedness is a nationwide effort held each September. The goal of the campaign is to increase public awareness about the importance of preparing for emergencies, including natural disasters and potential terrorist attacks at home, work, and school. Individuals are encouraged to create an emergency supply kit and to make a family emergency plan. Local officials are encouraged to prepare their communities.

Regardless of whether an emergency or disaster affects your entire community or a single site, be prepared at work and home!

At work:

- Know the evacuation route from your work area, and alternate routes in case the primary route is blocked by fire, smoke, etc.

- Understand procedures for sheltering in place.
- Understand the emergency duties you've been assigned (if any).
- Know where fire alarms, first-aid kits, fire extinguishers, and other emergency supplies and devices are (and how to use them).

At home:

- Know your community's emergency evacuation plan.
- Find out about the emergency plans in your children's schools and workplaces.
- Prepare an emergency kit & replace expired supplies.
- Conduct family emergency drills, including a family meeting or calling place if you're separated.



September — Do Housekeeping Hazards Contribute to Your Claims?

Many accidents experienced by IMLRMA member employees, such as slips, trips, and falls, occurred in part because of poor housekeeping in the workplace. Maintaining a workplace that is clean and safe is everyone's responsibility.

Many workplace accidents are the result of several safety issues. For example, an accident investigation of an employee who was injured while carrying a box may reveal several factors that contributed to the accident—poor lighting, a hazard in the way that caused the employee to trip, improper footwear, carrying a box that was too large for the employee to see over, lack of focus and attention, etc. However, housekeeping is an issue that is 100% preventable.

Make sure the following types of housekeeping hazards don't contribute to accidents in your workplaces:

- Leaks and spills that aren't cleaned up properly or timely.
- Stairs that are clearly marked.
- Walkways that are cluttered with materials that should be stored elsewhere.
- Boxes and other materials that are stacked precariously.
- Hazardous materials that are improperly stored, or too close to possible ignition sources.
- Tools that are left lying around after being used.
- Drawers and cabinet doors that are left hanging open.



Employees should scan the worksite for and fix housekeeping hazards before they begin a job. Make sure employees feel safe and confident in monitoring and reporting any housekeeping safety hazards as soon as they arise. Better yet, instill a safety culture that makes it the responsibility of every employee to address housekeeping hazards that aren't limited to higher levels of expertise (such as cleaning up or storing certain kinds of hazardous materials, etc.).

Housekeeping hazards can also cause accidents and injuries at home! Share housekeeping safety tips with employees and encourage them to promote safety at home.

News Flash Update — Free 2 Day Course on Crisis Communication Techniques

The Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System (ILEAS) is offering a free two-day course on practical training in crisis communication techniques. The course, "Public Information in a WMD/Terrorism Incident" will take place at the ILEAS Training Center in Urbana, IL on November 16 — 17, 2010.

This two-day course provides practical training in crisis communication techniques, and will focus on:

- The role of public information in incident management
- The information needs of the public in a crisis, and
- The various means of effectively communicating through the news media.

The program is designed for those whose duties may require them to interface with news media representatives during their community's response to a terrorist incident or major disaster. The

training will benefit public information officers, key elected officials, key department heads, emergency management officials from the public and private sectors, and key public health and medical personnel.

There is no cost to attend the course. Although there are no formal prerequisites, ILEAS recommends that participants be familiar with the Incident Command System (ICS) as outlined in FEMA Independent Study Program Courses IS100 and IS200.

Deadline to register is November 3, 2010, although in case seating is limited, you may want to get your registration in early!

The registration form is available from IMLRMA's website at: <http://www.imlrma.org/files/pages/5152/Public%20Information%20November%2016-17.pdf>



September — Take Safety Home!

Although IMLRMA focuses on helping members to prevent accidents and injuries on the job, the safety materials and information we provide can also help your employees stay safe at home.

Even when your employees are injured at home, your municipality still incurs costs—whether they're direct costs such as medical care, or indirect costs such as lost productivity, overtime, and reduced morale of employees who must step up to compensate for the absent employee.

Here are some safety topics that employees can benefit from taking their workplace safety knowledge home:

- Slips and trips
- Falls
- Power tools
- Power lawn mowers and trimmers
- Housekeeping
- Ladder safety
- Safe lifting
- PPE
- Driving
- Working safely in hot weather

Remind employees that safety isn't something that is important just to your municipality and their co-workers. They likely have spouses, children, parents, brothers and sisters, and friends who also depend on their safe actions!

In most cases, the safety rules that apply at work apply at home. When you're planning safety talks for your employees, try to think of instances where they may also use the knowledge at home. Safety doesn't end at 5:00 or on Fridays. Accidents don't know whether you're at home or work.

Your employees are your most valuable asset—help make sure that they're able to come to work every day — by being safe at home.

IMLRMA Resources

The IMLRMA website has many safety educational materials that pertain to home safety as much as they pertain to workplace safety. Share the information with your friends and family and remember to be safe on the weekends!

Underwriting Corner — Attention RMCs — Renewal Packets are Coming!

RMCs—You will be receiving your IMLRMA renewal packets in the coming week or so.

Please review the information carefully, make changes as needed, and return the packet no later than August 2nd.

Many of you already use the IMLRMA website to complete and print your forms to report changes to contact information, property, and vehicles. We appreciate that! Your assistance in keeping your entity information current during the year assures that we will be able to maintain accurate policy information and coverage.

Even if you consistently update your information throughout the year though, you still need to review the packet to ensure that other departments haven't made changes that need reporting.

Don't forget that you don't have to complete these alone! Many RMCs copy the packet and send specific parts to different Department Heads to complete and then compile the results. After all, your Department Heads are likely to know more about needed changes than you will—so take advantage of their knowledge!

Remember: Taking the time to complete and return these packets benefits you and your fellow RMCs.

Your benefits:

- Assurance that our coverage lists accurately reflect your current property and liability exposures. Otherwise:
- You run the risk of not having your property adequately protected in event of a loss.

- You could be overpaying contributions if you don't delete buildings or property that you no longer own or depreciate your vehicles values.

Benefits for other RMCs:

- The time that we take following up with you if you fail to return your packet and/or mark "no changes" could be time that is spent performing other services not just for you, but for your fellow RMCs.

Remember too that we are here to help answer your questions! Call your Membership Field Representative or Member Services!



Leadership Corner — Employee Recognition is Easy, Even in Tough Budget Times

As a leader in your municipal workplace, do you lament that you can't afford an elaborate Employee Recognition Program during tough budget times? Actually, it's during tough budget times, when employees are being asked to do more with less, that it's even more important for you to recognize their efforts. Luckily for **your** employees, you can recognize them in ways that cost nothing!

When you say the words "Employee Recognition," many people immediately think of tangible gifts or items that employees receive in recognition of their efforts overall or for a specific job well done. For some employees, "Employee Recognition" is just a joke that consists of HR handing out cheesy certificates of appreciation and everyone knows that they'll get one eventually.

Employee recognition doesn't always have to include a tangible object. Believe it or not, to employees, it's the genuine meaning **behind** the recognition that means most. Sure, a tangible object might be a nice reminder of the heartfelt appreciation every time he or she sees it, but it's really the thought that counts.

The best kind of recognition is:

Specific — Recognize an employee for something specific s/he did, not just for "doing a good job."

Relevant — Recognize an employee for something that actually makes a difference in the workplace, with co-workers, with community residents, etc.

Frequent — Employees like to be recognized often for their efforts and they like it to be done timely. Waiting until the annual holiday party to recognize all employees at once won't work. If you're unable to keep up the pace or to recognize every employee (you should try!), get supervisors and even co-workers involved in recognizing each other's efforts!

Here are four simple, no-cost ways to recognize your local government employees:

- **Praise** Remember to make it specific, relevant and timely. Don't praise someone publicly unless you know they won't be mortified!
- **Thanks** You can give a sincere and genuine "thank you" (again, specific and relevant) verbally, in a hand-written note, or even an email.

- **Opportunity** Give an employee a new way to contribute, a new learning opportunity, or more autonomy on the job. Make sure the employee feels that the opportunity is desirable, and not simply more work (i.e. punishment)!
- **Respect** — Providing an overall workplace that is safe, pleasant, free from harassment and strife makes employees feel valued and respected.

More than anything, remember that any employee recognition must be **authentic**. Employees can smell phony praise and recognition a mile away and phony recognition will do more harm than not having any recognition at all.

Simple efforts such as praise, thanks, opportunity and respect may seem like common sense, but are they well-practiced in your municipal workplace? They cost nothing — yet they mean more to your employees than all the certificates or plaques you could buy.

In tough budget times, make sure you and other leaders in your municipality look, see, and sincerely recognize the efforts of your employees.

IML Corner

IML Annual Conference – September 23 – 25, 2010, Chicago, IL

We hope to see IMLRMA members at the 97th IML Annual Conference this year! Check the IML website for frequent updates about the topics that will be covered and register soon.

For those of you who are close enough to drive in for a day, there are single-day registrations.

If your municipality has created a new program, or is doing something innovative and resourceful that you would like to showcase for your peers, consider participating in the Innovations Showcase! Deadline for submissions is Friday, August 27th.

Don't forget to stop by the IMLRMA booth in the Exhibit Hall and enter our drawing for prizes! We look forward to connecting to our members in person.

To check register for the conference, submit a project for the Innovations Showcase, or to check on updates of speakers and topics, see the IML website at: <http://iml.org>

IML Resources

The IML website has updates about the budget activities and legislation that is on the Governor's desk for signature or that has already been signed.

Check out the Legislative section at: <http://legislative.iml.org>

