

New York State Public Entities Safety Group 497

Safety Agenda

April 2005

Suggested Routing:	
___	Chair, Board of Comm.
___	Chief Executive Officer
___	Public Works
___	Chief, Fire Department
___	Site Administrators
___	Commissioners
___	Human Resources
___	Supt. Bldgs/Grounds
___	Elected Officials

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NEW CLAIMS SPECIALIST

Mary C. Hamilton has assumed responsibility for providing claims service to Safety Group 497 members. With over 25 years experience in the insurance industry, Mary has recently returned to Professional Underwriters at the Trooper, Pennsylvania office. Mary will be working with Linda Nicholls during the transition period to ensure that Safety Group 497 members continue to receive prompt, courteous service. “I look forward to working with Linda, Richard Danzig, Safety Group Manager, State Fund personnel and our Group 497 members in continuing to provide this very important service”, Mary stated. A letter of introduction, with more details on Mary’s background and experience, will be mailed to all 497 members along with the quarterly loss runs. “I hope everyone will take a moment to ‘get to know me’ through the letter and that they will contact me

- ↪ Everyone in the partnership, from the executive level to the supervisors to the employees has responsibility and accountability for workplace safety
- ↪ The analysis of every injury report can lead to corrective actions that prevent additional injuries
- ↪ Bring in a dermatologist to your next safety meeting to talk to employees who work outside about skin cancer and provide sun hats and information on other outdoor hazards such as ticks
- ↪ Begin the workday with stretching exercises for employees who do heavy physical work.

There is Value in Health Management

With health insurance costs continuing to rise at double-digit rates, many employers are adopting health management and consumer-directed health care programs to help control costs. They are sure to have beneficial effects on the cost of workers’ compensation, too. The 10th annual survey of large employers by the Watson Wyatt Corporation and the National Business Council on Health found that nearly 70% of the respondents are using a disease management program, and 40% are using lifestyle behavior change programs through their health plans. Thirty-two percent offer obesity reduction programs.

The survey found that employers that are doing the best job of controlling health care costs trends have a much greater focus on health management than those with higher cost increases.

Tips for Cutting Workers’ Compensation Costs

- ↪ Safety training is a partnership between the employer and the employee
- ↪ Safety training is an ongoing enterprise, not a once-a-year safety meeting

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The best performing companies – those with a two-year average cost increase in the lowest quartile – kept cost increases at a remarkably low 5% whereas poor-performing companies saw a 15% increase.

Large employers have also begun offering financial incentives to encourage employees to complete health risk appraisals, use better providers, and to improve their personal health.

FEMA Releases School Fires Report

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has issued a special report that explores the causes and characteristics of school fires.

According to the report, there were approximately 6,000 school structure fires in the United States during 2002. Thirty-seven percent of all school structure fires and 52 percent of middle and high school structure fires are caused by incendiary or suspicious activity.

FEMA believes that school fires are largely preventable through increased community prevention, outreach and student supervision. The full report can be downloaded from <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/statistics/reports/pubs/tfrs.shtm>.

2005 Arson Awareness Week

Arson Awareness Week is May 1 – 7, 2005. The theme is Juvenile Arson Prevention. Arson Awareness Week is sponsored by the United States Fire Administration (USFA) and the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI).

Fifty-five percent of all arson arrests in the U.S. are of children under 18 with nearly half of these age 15 or less, and with more than 5% under age 10. Juvenile arson and youth-set fires result in over 300 deaths and 2,000 injuries annually, \$300 million in

The **major goals of Arson Awareness Week** are:

- Create a national awareness and understanding of the youth fire-setting and juvenile arson problem in the United States.
- Encourage communities to get involved
- Organize local events
- Obtain media delivery of the message.

For more information and a media kit on how your district can spearhead the arson awareness effort, contact the United States Fire Administration at 1-888-603-3100.

107 Firefighters Died on Duty in 2004

Firefighters continue to give their lives for their communities. Volunteer, seasonal and part-time firefighters accounted for 78 of the 107 deaths. Half of the firefighters died from traumatic injuries such as asphyxiation, burns, drowning, vehicle crashes, and other physical injuries. The rest of the deaths were from non-traumatic injuries such as heart attacks and strokes. Heart attacks caused the death of 49 on-duty firefighters. Three were killed when fire apparatus were backed up over them. Five were killed when they were struck by passing vehicles at the scene of the fire, and four were killed when they fell from fire department vehicles.

Twenty firefighters died in vehicle accidents, seven of those in the crash of the firefighter's personal vehicle. The average age of firefighters killed on duty was 47.

Sixteen Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives have been developed for guidance of local departments in