

New York State Public Entities Safety Group 497

Safety Agenda

Suggested Routing:
 Chair, Board of Com
 Chief Executive Offic
 Public Works
 Chief, Fire Departme
 Site Administrators
 Commissioners
 Human Resources
 Supt. Bldgs/Grounds
 Elected Officials

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The Cost of Workplace Injuries Continues to Rise

According to the latest issue of the Liberty Mutual Workplace Safety Index, serious on-the-job injuries, those causing an employee to miss six or more days of work, continue to rise significantly faster than medical and wage inflation. This is despite a drop in the number of serious injuries over the past four years.

Top Ten Workplace Injuries in 2002

INJURY TYPE	PERCENTAGE
Overexertion	26.6%
Falls on Same Level	12.5%
Bodily Reaction	10.8%
Falls to Lower Level	9.2%
Struck by Object	8.9%
Repetitive Motion	5.7%
Highway Incident	5.2%
Struck Against Object	4.7%
Caught in/Compressed By	3.8%
Assaults	0.9%

Note that the top three injury causes account for 50% of the total (in number and cost.) They are also the fastest growing of all injury costs.

So what does the Workplace Safety Index have to do with injuries in your organization?

Injuries aren't inevitable. Take Charge!

It provides a reference point for your evaluation and planning. Injuries aren't inevitable, and the way to prevent them is to have a target, a plan, and follow-up. Take a look at your accident/injury reports for the past few years and look for a pattern. If you show a pattern of injuries in the top three injury types, you certainly will want to target at least one of them – it has the potential for the greatest cost savings.

On the other hand, if you have had a series of highway incidents, you may want to concentrate your efforts there.

It is imperative to have a plan for addressing the causes of work-related injuries. Improvement won't happen without a plan. A good plan targets high cost injuries, sets clear targets for reducing those injuries, implements changes to control risks and train workers, and regularly measures performance and updates the plan.

Need to Control Use of Cell Phones on Highway Jobs

While working in the field, talking on the personal cell phone is not appropriate. It is dangerous. Working in or near highways requires constant awareness for the safety of others, and requires our full attention.

We recommend that personal cell phones not be allowed on the job site, and that employees be prohibited from making or receiving personal cell phone calls while on highway-type jobs.

August 2005

Let's Get a Handle on Firefighter Deaths

As of May 1, 50 firefighters have died in the line of duty this year – if this trend continues, 2005 will be the deadliest year for firefighters in 30 years.

Everyone knows that heart attacks are the number one cause of firefighter on-duty deaths. So it is a shocker to learn that about half of the firefighters who died of heart attacks had known heart conditions, and another third had heart conditions that could have been detected by simple medical testing. This revelation comes from a ten year study of sudden cardiac deaths of American firefighters conducted by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

Clearly, firefighters with known heart conditions are responding to fires and other emergencies, and they are dying in large numbers.

NFPA has consistently found in its annual studies of firefighter deaths that almost 50% had prior heart attacks, bypass surgery or angioplasties. According to the author of the study, probably another 30% had atherosclerotic disease which could have been detected beforehand with a medical checkup.

Almost all the older firefighters who died as a result of cardiac death were volunteers

the predictable deaths of older members of the district.

District policies requiring proper screening and follow-up care, job duty restrictions and active promotion of heart-healthy behavior need to be implemented, “sold” to the members, and enforced.

Fire Districts can prevent many of the deaths of older members.

For guidance on a heart – healthy program see NFPA 1500, Fire Department Safety and Health Program; NFPA 1582, Comprehensive Medical Program for Fire Departments; and NFPA 1583, Health-Related Fitness Programs for Firefighters.

NIOSH also has an extensive topic page on preventing firefighter fatalities. See www.cdc.gov/niosh/firehome.html.



Safety Group 497 Fire Districts need to take a sustained, focused approach to the prevention of