



CONNECTING & INNOVATING
SINCE 1913

September 27, 2013

Rodney Blank - rblank@acegroup.cc
City Administrator
City of Hokah
102 Main Street
Hokah, MN 55941

Re: Loss Control Meeting and Public Works Ergonomic Survey on September 11, 2013

Dear Mr. Blank:

On the above date, I met with you to introduce myself as the city's Loss Control Consultant, provide loss control resources, discuss past recommendations and conduct a Public Works Ergonomics Survey with Allen Kirchoff and Chris Oliver. This meeting was in conjunction with your participation in the **League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust** workers compensation and property casualty insurance program. As a result of our meeting we reached some general conclusions about your safety programs. Those conclusions and our discussion are outlined below.

Purpose of Visit

The purpose of my visit was to perform a public works ergonomic review. Ergonomics is the science of designing the job to fit the worker, rather than having the worker adjust to the physical demands of the job. Changes in tools, equipment, or procedures are some of the ways to improve ergonomics, and reduce the potential for future injuries.

Conclusion

- The city will evaluate and consider implementing recommendations as a result of the Public Works Ergonomic Survey in an effort to reduce ergonomic related injuries.
- The city has made ergonomic improvement in the past that reduce lifting and addressed work positioning,
- The city will consider utilizing an OSHA Grant to assist in the cost of new ergonomic improvements.

LMCIT Injury Trends in Public Works

Recent LMCIT research shows that Public Works has the largest amount of loss costs among member city job classes; roughly thirty five percent (35 %). The most frequent and costly injuries in Public Works are sprains, strains, and other musculoskeletal injuries. These injuries often occur

while performing routine tasks such as lifting manhole covers, turning valves or hydrants, changing snowplow blades, handling pumps, tree trimming, lifting trash barrels, and otherwise pushing, pulling, or lifting equipment or tools.

Tasks performed on an infrequent basis also cause sudden injury, and cumulative trauma injuries; therefore, ergonomic improvements should be considered even for non-routine tasks to reduce risk and prevent employee injuries. To lower any equipment costs consider equipment sharing agreements, OSHA safety grants, and the LMCIT safety loan program.

Ergonomic Risk Factors:

Implementing ergonomic improvements that minimize risk factors will help to reduce the chance of employee injury. It is generally accepted that job tasks involving one or more of the following ergonomic risk factors can contribute to these types of injuries:

- Excessive Force (Weight)
- Awkward Postures
- Vibration
- Repetition
- Contact Stress

LMCIT Safety Blogs

LMCIT now hosts two new safety blogs. One created for the member public works department and the other for Public Safety, Fire and Police departments. The blogs offers tips and tools for doing the job safely and provides a connection for the respective departments for sharing ideas and success on safety related programs and activities. The Public Works blog is located at: <http://lmcpipeline.blogspot.com/> The Public Safety fire and police blog is located at: <http://lmcontheline.blogspot.com/>

Status of Previous Recommendations:

Continue to work on incomplete/in progress past recommendations. These past recommendations are still important to complete, in order to help lower the city's potential liability, increase employee safety and help comply with safety regulations.

2-9/06 Develop a Contractor Safety Program. – *Incomplete*

4-10/11 Verify with a qualified electrician that all outdoor receptacles and panels are equipped with Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI) and have protective cover plates installed.

Sanitary Sewer Assessment Recommendations:

Please continue to work on these, as they are important to reducing potential liability and also assist in increasing the life of your city's sanitary sewer system.

The details of the above recommendations are in letters dated 9/14/2006 and 10/21/11. If you have any questions on any of these recommendations, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Recommendations and comments are provided for loss control and risk exposure improvement purposes only in conjunction with the insurance program referenced above. They are not made for the purpose of complying with the requirements of any law, rule or regulation. We do not infer or imply in the making of these recommendations and comments that all sites were reviewed or that all possible hazards were noted. The final responsibility for conducting loss control and risk management programs must rest with the insured.

60 Day Response:

I have submitted new recommendations for your consideration as a tool to help guide your risk management efforts. The decision to complete the recommendations, either in part or in full or the decision not to complete recommendations lies entirely with the insured. The League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust believes completion of recommendations can ultimately reduce property, liability or workers' compensation losses as the case may be.

I am available to offer additional assistance if needed. Please contact me by mail, fax, telephone or e-mail within the next 60 days to let me know what, if any, progress you are making on each recommendation. I look forward to hearing from you.

Service Plan:

As discussed during our meeting, we agreed to tentatively focus on slip, trip and fall hazards and their controls and to conduct a slip-fall survey, but we can change that focus if needed. I will contact you to schedule this meeting.

Thanks again for your time and courtesy during my visit. As always, if you have safety or loss control related questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Paul Gladen

Loss Control Consultant

Cell: (612) 875-5146; Fax: (612) 766-3199; Admin Assistant: (612) 766-3172

pgladen@berkleyrisk.com

Copy: Tom Danielson, Agent, Danielson Insurance Agency - tmddia@acegroup.cc

APPENDIX

Recommendations:

The referenced products and/or services are provided solely as a source of general assistance and should not be taken as the League's endorsement of the particular product or service or a recommendation that it will meet your unique needs.

1-9/13 The power line leading to the restroom on the east side the city park is in contact with a tree.

The power line currently goes through a tree in the park and is in contact with the branches of the tree. The tree branches rub on the line as they move in the wind which is wearing the insulation on the power line. The tree should be trimmed to eliminate the wear and reduce the severe potential electrical shock hazard that is present with the current situation.



2-9/13 The electrical service panel to the city park restroom poses an electrical shock hazard and should be locked and secured.

The electrical panel was unlocked and open at the time of our visit. There was no protection inside of the panel to prevent people from coming in contact with the exposed electrical circuits. A licensed electrician should be consulted to update the service and secure the electrical panel to eliminate the current electrical shock hazard.

Public Works Ergonomic Survey Recommendations.

3-9/13 Consider a lift to improve the ergonomics of installing plow wear blades by using a modified floor jack or other lifting device as illustrated below, to lift the blades in place.

This should be done to reduce back strain and lifting while working in an awkward position.

(Modified motorcycle jack)

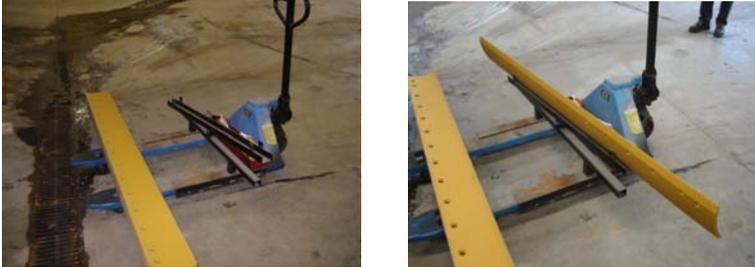


(modified floor jack)



Recommendations and comments are provided for loss control and risk exposure improvement purposes only in conjunction with the insurance program referenced above. They are not made for the purpose of complying with the requirements of any law, rule or regulation. We do not infer or imply in the making of these recommendations and comments that all sites were reviewed or that all possible hazards were noted. The final responsibility for conducting loss control and risk management programs must rest with the insured.

(City of Staples using a pallet jack and jig)



City of Benson-wear blade lifter



4-9/13 Improve access to equipment with work positioning equipment such as a “Stepper II” or portable stairs.

The use of a stable platform such as a wheel step will reduce hazards associated with working from unstable platforms, reaching and awkward body positioning and mechanics while working on truck.

sales@tsissg.com

http://directory.fleetmag.com/product/10124171/Safe_Shop_Tools_Inc_Stepper_II

<http://www.uniquetruck.com/c-4-steps-and-safety-ladders.aspx>

Stepper



(Big step tire step)



Recommendations and comments are provided for loss control and risk exposure improvement purposes only in conjunction with the insurance program referenced above. They are not made for the purpose of complying with the requirements of any law, rule or regulation. We do not infer or imply in the making of these recommendations and comments that all sites were reviewed or that all possible hazards were noted. The final responsibility for conducting loss control and risk management programs must rest with the insured.

5-9/13 Consider the acquisition of kneeling pads, knee pads, and or matting.

Kneeling pads and padded matting reduce the static pressure associated with working on hard surfaces such as concrete in the shop and kneeling while working in the field on concrete, asphalt and compacted soils. It is recommended to have kneeling pads in the vehicle so that employees will have ready access to them while working outside of the shop in the field.



Anti-fatigue matting for stationary work



6-9/13 Consider improving the safety of sidewalk snow removal and the risk of the equipment catching an obstruction

The following product can reduce employee injury and equipment damage associated with the snow bucket or snow blower catching a sidewalk lip. This technology allows the equipment to jump over the lip instantaneously.

Snowalker: Phone Number- 320-760-1485

<http://www.safeloader.com/>

The **Safeloader™** Technology is a mechanical linkage device designed to protect operators and equipment.

Bobcat Skid Steer



Mechanism for mower with snow blower



Recommendations and comments are provided for loss control and risk exposure improvement purposes only in conjunction with the insurance program referenced above. They are not made for the purpose of complying with the requirements of any law, rule or regulation. We do not infer or imply in the making of these recommendations and comments that all sites were reviewed or that all possible hazards were noted. The final responsibility for conducting loss control and risk management programs must rest with the insured.

7-9/13 Consider adding a wheel tool kit to the portable water pump to reduce the force needed to move the pump.

This should be considered to reduce the lifting hazard associated with lifting and carrying pumps and generators.

(Northern Tool and Equipment \$39.99)

http://www.northerntool.com/shop/tools/product_200326267_200326267

<http://www.northerntool.com/shop/tools/categorytrailers-trailer-parts+trailers>

(Northern Tool Trailer \$279.99)



(Stored on elevated cart)



(Truck tailgate lift)



(Pump stored on trailer)



8-9/13 Consider the acquisition of a light-weight diffuser for use during hydrant flushing operations.

Hydrant flushing is a laborious task that requires repetitive tasks which can lead to cumulative trauma injuries. The use of a light-weight diffuser can help to reduce the repetitive lifting hazards and strain while performing the operations.



9-9/13 Consider the acquisition of trash pickup tools such as a “Niffity-Nabber” for picking garbage up in public areas.

The use of mechanical aids to pick up trash will minimize bending and stooping.



Recommendations and comments are provided for loss control and risk exposure improvement purposes only in conjunction with the insurance program referenced above. They are not made for the purpose of complying with the requirements of any law, rule or regulation. We do not infer or imply in the making of these recommendations and comments that all sites were reviewed or that all possible hazards were noted. The final responsibility for conducting loss control and risk management programs must rest with the insured.