

Risk Services Notes

A New Years Resolution For 2009

It is that time of year that most people make a new year's resolution to change something in their lives. Lose 10 pounds, quit smoking, exercise more, you get the picture. Most will give it a good try, some will succeed, but most will give it up after a few months. We at Risk Management want you to make one workplace resolution this year and keep at it for the entire year— **Be Safe While at Work!**

The 2008 Facts for the State of Florida Workers' Compensation Program:

- 13,632 reported workers' compensation claims with some amount paid during the 2008 calendar year.
- Total Estimated Accrued Liability of \$142 Million for these 13,362 claims.
- Two Causes of Loss – Falls/Slips/Trips and Strains – account for 51% of all these claim costs and 40% of the number of claims.

The Facts Within The Facts:

For the vast majority of Falls/Slips/Trips and Strains workers' compensation claims, the overriding cause of these claims is behavioral in nature. This means that the individual injured contributed to his or her injury due to their lack of thinking through their work effort or not paying total attention to what they were doing. We, as employees, must understand that our work environments contain multiple hazards and we must be constantly be aware of these dangers.

Two Solutions to Be Safe:

Good housekeeping is the first and the most important activity for the prevention of falls due to slips and trips. Good housekeeping includes:

- Cleaning all spills immediately.
- Marking spills and wet areas.
- Mopping or sweeping debris from floors.
- Removing obstacles from walkways and always keeping them free of clutter.
- Securing (tacking, taping, etc.) mats, rugs and carpets that do not lay flat.
- Always closing file cabinet or storage drawers.
- Covering cables that cross walkways.
- Keep working areas and walkways well lit.

Proper lifting techniques will help prevent many of the strains we encounter at work. These techniques include:

- Size up the load to gauge the weight.
- Do a few stretching exercises to warm up your back, arm and leg muscles. Cold, stiff muscles can be easily injured.
- Plan your route. Make sure you know where you are going with the object and check the route for obstacles. If you are moving something a long distance, use a hand truck.
- Protect your hands. Examine the load for sharp edges, metal staples or leaks. Wear gloves if necessary.
- Lift the object properly. Get close to the object and center your body over your feet, bend your knees and keep your spine straight. Next, grasp the package and use your stronger leg muscles to push yourself upright.
- As you start the lift, raise your eyes and look ahead. This will keep your spine in correct alignment.
- Keep the load close to your body to exert less force on your back.
- Make sure you can see clearly over the load. If your vision is blocked you may trip and fall.
- Always move your feet rather than twist your body to change directions.
- To unload, crouch down and use your thigh muscles to lower the object. Keep your back straight, and the article held close to your body while unloading.

Let's keep this new year's resolution and have a safe and injury free 2009. Please feel free to print and distribute the attached poster.



**A heavy load and obstructed view
Could be the end of you.**