

## WORKERS COMPENSATION

The costs associated with employee injury goes beyond disruption to services, potential staffing shortage, and an internal questioning of policies and procedures. It directly effects employee retention.

Workers compensation insurance is required by State statute, and the premium paid for workers compensation insurance is dependent on frequency and severity of claims during a 3-year period of time. Periodically there are market adjustments that may result in substantial increases in the premium paid for workers compensation insurance. The insurance coverages provide payment for medical and rehabilitation expenses and a major percentage of lost wages to the employee for time off of work. The insurance does not cover or pay for the hidden costs associated with the employee's time off the job, the wages paid to the injured employee's replacement, and the potential of overtime for staffing to continue to "get the job done".

It is the organization's responsibility to assure that the workplace is safe and that injuries are truly accidents. It is the organization's responsibility to assure that injured employees receive prompt medical care. You made an investment in personnel that may be lost if an injured employee never returns to the organization.

In order to monitor your workers compensation program; consider the following loss prevention and control ideas:

- Is your workplace safe? Do you have a safety committee?
- Do you inspect the physical plant at least quarterly looking for unsafe conditions?
- Do you monitor employee behavior and not tolerate horseplay or unsafe practices?
- Can your employees physically do the job for which they were hired?
- Do supervisors hold their employees accountable for safe behavior?
- Are first aid kits available and fully stocked? Are employees trained in first aid?
- Are HAZMAT and MSDS books kept in an accessible location? Do your employees know what these are?
- Are incidents and injuries reported within 24 hours?
- Do you contract with a physician group to provide emergency care for injured employees?
- Do you stay in touch with injured employees and express a concern for their well being?
- Do you have a return-to-work policy? Is it practiced?
- Do you monitor losses and attempt to correct common areas causing employee injury?
- Have you examined at least three years of loss runs looking for patterns?
- Is safety kept in the minds of your employees? Do you post safety signs? Do you provide incentives for a safe work environment? Is there regularly scheduled education about safety techniques? Are videos and printed material available for employee review?

Seem like a difficult task? Don't have time? In addition to reducing the probability of your employees suffering frequent or serious injury, some states, like Pennsylvania, offer 5% abatement on workers' compensation premiums for companies that have an active safety committee.