City & County of San Francisco
Department of Human Resources

WORKERS’ COMPENSATION UPDATES
BY PEGGY SUGARMAN, WC DIRECTOR

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WC BUDGETS:
Governor Brown has proposed a substantial increase to the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) programs that are 100% funded by California employers through state assessments.

In 2014, DHR Workers’ Compensation Division paid $2.439 million in state assessment fees which fund the Division of Workers’ Compensation, Labor and Enforcement Compliance, the Workers’ Compensation Fraud Assessment, and other programs. The assessment factors are based on indemnity payments for self-insured employers.

The increased budget is expected to fund one of the last portions of SB863 (2012): a $120 million dollar Return-to-Work Fund that is designed to make supplemental payments to permanently disabled employees whose permanent disability benefits are proportionately low in comparison with their earnings losses.

The DIR budget also includes 50 new Cal-OSHA inspector positions.

The annual state assessment fee is budgeted into the CCSF Workers’ Compensation Program administrative overhead. Accordingly, departments will see increases in the overhead allocations as well as increases in estimated claims budgets to cover legislated increases in permanent disability payments and other known cost drivers.

MPN POSTING REQUIREMENTS:
State regulators have eliminated the requirement to post the Medical Provider Network Written Notification. Prior to this change, a failure to post the notice could result in out-of-network care, which can cause delays in the approval of necessary medical treatment.

While the information is no longer required to be posted in areas where employees congregate, it doesn’t hurt to provide more information than the law requires.

Questions can be directed to the DHR Workers’ Compensation Division.

BENCHMARKING:
We have been working on benchmarking our WC costs against industry claims and, despite the rising costs, we compare quite favorably to the industry. And, while our claim volume is increasing, our injury rate — the number of claims per 100 FTEs, has been steadily declining.

We are working with the controller’s office to provide relevant data to the departments. These reports should be available to departments shortly.

CATASTROPHIC ILLNESS PROGRAM UPDATE:
As of January 1, 2015, the Department of Public Health delegated the administrative functions of the CAT/ILL Program to DHR. All applications will be processed through the Workers’ Compensation Division.

The forms have been updated to reflect the change and can be accessed on the DHR Website.
SAVING LIVES WITH AEDS

The CCSF Wellness Program is a major step forward in moving our employees towards healthy, more satisfying, and more productive lives. However, a sudden cardiac arrest can happen even to those who are attentive to their personal health. According to OSHA, there are 220,000 victims of sudden cardiac arrest annually in the US, of which about 10,000 occur at work.

Many departments are purchasing Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) to increase an employee’s chance of survival while waiting for emergency response teams to come to the rescue, which dramatically increases survival rates if used immediately. Of course, they only help when: a) the employer purchases the machine; b) staff is trained in its use; and c) trained staff quickly responds when an emergency arises.

To begin the New Year, take a moment to look at your emergency plan and see what may need to be done to ensure that your employees have the opportunity to survive a sudden cardiac arrest. Do you have the machine? Is there enough trained staff to respond quickly? Is the machine accessible in an emergency? And, have you practiced?

To find out more, check out the following links today. It could mean a life saved tomorrow:

https://www.osha.gov/Publications/3185.html
AND

ENCOURAGE EMPLOYEES TO REPORT UNSAFE CONDITIONS!

We hope that CCSF employees feel free to report unsafe working conditions to their supervisors. Departments are clearing doing a good job considering that we get very few anonymous reports.

You can timely address hazards and prevent injuries by ensuring that employees know that the hot line is available! The number to call is:

(415) 557-4999
COMPLYING WITH CAL/OSHA’S HEAT ILLNESS PREVENTION REGULATIONS

By Nancy George, Safety Officer, GSA

The Cal/OSHA regulations require employers to take four steps to prevent heat illness for employees working outdoors:

1. TRAINING
   Train all employees and supervisors about heat illness prevention.

2. WATER
   Provide enough fresh water so that each employee can drink at least 1 quart per hour, and encourage them to drink it.

3. SHADE
   Provide access to shade and encourage employees to take a cool-down rest in the shade for at least 5 minutes. They should not wait until they feel sick to cool down.

4. PLANNING
   Develop and implement written procedures for complying with the Cal/OSHA Heat Illness Prevention Standard.

These regulations were written to protect employees from heat-related illness, but they apply even here in San Francisco where temperatures are mild. Fortunately, Cal/OSHA has lots of information available on their website to help us comply, including sample programs, training slides, videos, and posters: http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/heatillnessinfo.html.

HEAT STROKE: The most serious and life-threatening condition that may result in death.

HEAT EXHAUSTION: The body’s response to an excessive loss of water and salt, usually through excessive sweating.

HEAT CRAMPS: Muscle pains or a spasm caused by strenuous activity in hot environments that depletes the body's salt and moisture content during sweating.

HEAT RASH: A skin irritation caused by excessive sweating; looks like a red cluster of pimples or small blisters.

WARNING SIGNS:
- High Body Temp (above 103°F)
- Red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Confusion/disorientation/confusion
- Seizures or convulsions
- Unconsciousness/fainting

TAKE ACTION—CALL 911 AND COOL VICTIM BY:
- Moving victim to shade; remove outer clothing
- Spray/sponge with cool water & fan vigorously
- Apply wet cloths, towels or ice, or soak victim’s clothing in cold water
- Call hospital for further instructions if emergency personnel is delayed
For those departments who do not have embedded safety personnel, DHR will be asking for copies of your updated Injury & Illness Prevention Program. Make sure that your department maintains the OSHA 300 Log at each work location.

Check your Postings:

- OSHA 300a Summary posted in each work location from February 1–April 30 for the previous calendar year
- Safety & Health Protection the Job (updated 8/2014, check Cal/OSHA publications)
- Notice to Employees Injuries Caused By Work Poster (DWC-7 Form)
- Codes of Safe Practice
- Evacuation Plan
- Safety Suggestion Forms

- Whistleblower Protection Notice (Labor Code 1102.8[a])
- Workplace Discrimination & Harassment (DFEH)
- EDD Disability Insurance Notice (DE 1857A Rev. 42)

TO ACCESS ALL WORKPLACE POSTING REQUIREMENTS AND FORMS, GO TO: http://www.dir.ca.gov/wpnodb.html

A Publication of CCSF—Department of Human Resources
Find helpful forms and materials on our website sfhr.org

CRIME PREVENTION TIPS
BY PEGGY SUGARMAN, WC DIRECTOR

I love being an employee of the City & County of San Francisco. Every day, I appreciate its vibrancy—especially the honor of serving a city government renowned as much for its ideals as for its beauty. My work with all of the departments can take me from City Hall to the beautiful administrative offices of the Fine Arts Museum in Golden Gate Park; to the PUC Water District offices in Bay View/Hunter’s Point, or to the Hall of Justice.

Although I enjoy these strolls, I try never to lose my focus on what is happening around me and to stay alert to the fact that I am a potential target for would-be (or actual) criminals.

The SFPD posts a very informative Public Safety Advisory on their website that lists the practical things that you can do to keep yourself safe. A great example is to refrain from using your cell phone or electronic notepad while you are walking or waiting, since thieves will target these items to steal them from you. If you are driving, park in a well-lit area. Or if you are walking, try to walk with someone or walk where there are other people around. For a complete list of the SFPD’s Public Safety Advisory, go to: http://www.sf-police.org/index.aspx?page=1596 and click on Robbery Prevention Tips.

Should you see criminal activity, the SFPD has implemented a new “text-a-tip” line through which you can use your mobile phone to anonymously text information to SFPD Operations. Find out more about this exciting and innovative opportunity to help fight crime. To find out how it works, go to: http://www.sf-police.org/index.aspx?page=41