

Manager/Supervisor Risk Management  
#1 – 11/1/11  
A twice weekly e-mail training for YCPARMIA members

TOPIC: WHY ME?

You have been promoted! Immediately following that promotion to manager/supervisor came an intensive training process where you were taught your new duties, how to manage people, how to recognize and deal with personnel issues, and all the other things that you didn't have to deal with before -- or maybe not. For some people the process is much simpler; you are given a new title, and were intuitively expected to perform its duties. You were supervised before your promotion, so obviously you know what the job entails and how to supervise others. Over time you pick up, in various ways, the skills that you need to get the job done. You do the things that were done before, the way they were done before, and the immediate measure of your success is getting the job done. No surprise: as public entities have seen their budgets shrink the supervisor's job has become more difficult, and the cost of doing business has come under greater scrutiny.

In private industry it can be a little bit different. There the only measure of success is often profit. You are expected to get the job done and to produce a certain margin of profit by controlling expenses while maximizing revenue. Successful companies therefore place a great deal of importance on risk management because the cost of adverse risk development negatively (sometimes catastrophically) impacts the bottom line. All claims are considered preventable, and therefore the expense associated with risk exposures is unacceptable. Managers/supervisors are often held to a zero tolerance for employee injuries and third party claims, and controlling risk is often part of their annual evaluations and a condition of continued employment.

In, what is obviously, a broad generality, California public entities have been much more risk tolerant than private industry. Under the pressure of current budget constraints it is possible that we are seeing a shift by public entities to a less risk tolerant position. If they follow the example of private industry, the responsibility for addressing risk exposures will increasingly fall on their managers and supervisors. The purpose of this e-training program is to provide the how's and why's to lighten that burden.

Next Topic: What is Risk Management?