

Manager/Supervisor Risk Management

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A twice weekly e-mail training for YCPARMIA members

TOPIC: SAFETY –MATCHING PREVENTION TO INJURIES - CONTINUED

One of the issues that is hard to understand is how accepting our managers can be of accidents and injuries. They happen and are apparently forgotten. This is probably understandable for the isolated small injury, but we have employees who suffer new injuries on a semi-regular basis. They cost the member agencies thousands of dollars in WC benefits, and that is before any consideration is given to replacement labor costs and lost productivity. As stated in the last topic, any injury should be considered a big deal that requires responsive action by management.

Recently, one of our departments, the Yolo Sheriff, took issue with traffic accidents. They made a management decision that accidents would no longer be tolerated. An industry study determined that the majority of injuries to officers were caused by excessive speed and not wearing seat belts. The department also determined – by automatic dash camera activations -- that in the previous year deputies had violated department policy by driving in excess of 90 mph without lights and siren 616 times. To address this issue the department:

- Conducted mandatory training;
- Recognized drivers who reduced speeding activations to 0;
- Documented counseling for those who continued to violate department policy; and
- Gave a written reprimand to one driver.

The result has been a nine month period with no accidents and no injuries. Other departments have taken notice, and are in the process of implementing similar programs.

Significantly, this shows what an entity can do when they identify a risk exposure, and management commits to reducing or eliminating it. Setting a standard, training to that standard, and then holding employees accountable to that standard changes the culture. It required a small commitment of time and resources, and paid big dividends by avoiding WC and liability claim payments.

Next Topic: Safety – Matching Prevention to Injuries - continued