

# **GARDINER SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**Mission:** "To be proactive in identifying training needs and workplace hazards to ensure the safety of city employees and the general public."

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2004**

**8:30-9:30 AM**

**COUNCIL ROOM**

## **MINUTES**

**Present:** Chuck Applebee, Pat Gilbert, Paul Gray, Francis Grey, Mark Kimball, Jim Toman

**Guests:** Susan Caston, AIC, CIC, CPIW, Sr. Underwriter MMA  
Dr. John Bielecki M.D., Fellow of the American College of Occupational & Environmental Medicine; Medical Director, Work Place Health  
Tracey Ayotte, MMA Designated Claims Representative for Gardiner (Loss time claims)  
Liza Cunningham, MMA Designated Claims Technician for Gardiner (Medical only claims)  
Michelle Fecteau, RN, COHN-S, Sr. Nurse Case Manager MMA

Our guests gave an informative presentation on ways to positively impact our workers compensation costs. They explained how our number of loss claims is compared to similarly classified employers to determine our mod rate. Fewer losses than average result in a mod rate lower than 1.00, and more losses than average result in a mod rate higher than 1.00. The mod rate is used to calculate our workers compensation contribution.

Timely and appropriate medical treatment, timely return to work, and good claims management reduce the mod rate and have a positive effect on workers comp costs. In order to accomplish this, our guests recommended the following:

1. All workers comp cases should be referred immediately to our "preferred provider" instead of the patient's regular physician. Dr. Bielecki stressed that a patient's best chance to have a complete and quick recovery after an injury is for them to receive timely assessment and appropriate treatment as soon as possible after the injury occurs. Our preferred provider specializes in work-related injuries, and that specialization can help the patient have a full and speedy recovery.
2. We should implement a transitional work program. This allows an injured employee to return to work as soon as possible. The employee maintains their relationships with other employees at work and maintains high morale. The transitional work is time-

limited, temporary, and aimed at transitioning the employee back to regular duties as soon as is medically possible. The money that is saved could be directed to better employee benefits.

In order to develop a transitional work program, our guests would require a brainstorming meeting with all Department Heads and the City Manager present. This would be to create a list of tasks that an injured employee could perform. By the end of the meeting, all Department Heads and the City Manager would have to reach consensus that they would support and implement the transitional work program. If a Department Head or the City Manager could not attend the brainstorming meeting, then it would have to be rescheduled.

The Safety Committee decided to refer this to the Department Head meeting for further action.

Chief Kimball noted that we have not done any follow-up in reference to our Ergonomics training class.