

## What To Do When You Have A Seriously Injured Worker

Injuries happen in the workplace on a daily basis, but most of these injuries are not serious and the worker returns to work quickly. On that rare occasion when a company has a serious injury, it is important to be prepared to handle it correctly.

What is considered to be a serious injury? A serious injury or illness according to Cal/OSHA means: "Any injury or illness occurring in a place of employment or in connection with any employment which requires inpatient hospitalization for a period to excess of 24 hours for other than medical observation or in which an employee suffers a loss of any member of the body or suffers any serious degree of permanent disfigurement, but does not include any injury or illness or death caused by the commission of a Penal Code violation, except the violation of Section 385 of the Penal Code, or an accident on a public street or highway." (Cal/OSHA) If your employee has such an injury you are required to report this injury immediately (not longer than 8 hours) after you know of the injury. Serious injuries must be reported to the nearest Cal/OSHA Enforcement office by phone.

Once you have taken care of the reporting requirements, it is time to manage this serious injury. A proactive employer will achieve a much better outcome than one who does not take an active roll. A company representative should visit the patient in the hospital and reassure the patient and the family that the company is there for them. Follow up with the doctor so you better understand the patient's treatment. You want to make sure the patient is getting the best possible care with the correct specialists. The employer should follow up with the patient on a regular basis during the recovery process. It is important to meet personally

with the treating doctors and therapists. You are going for the best recovery you can get. Involvement and communication will pay off for you, the patient and everyone else at your workplace.



An accident investigation should be conducted as soon as possible. Examine with other employees, in the greatest detail, how the accident occurred and take immediate corrective measures. Unless the employee was negligent, consider a "no blame, no shame" response and get as much educational, proactive value from this as you can. If no one learns from the accident, it will happen again. If the employee was negligent, take the appropriate steps as per your company policy.

With a serious injury Cal/OSHA will make a site visit. You must have an "Illness and Injury Prevention Program" in place and be able to show proof of compliance. You will have to give the inspector a written report of the accident investigation your company conducted. The report must include the following:

- Verification that an inspection was completed;
- Identity of the individuals completing the inspection;
- The unsafe conditions or practices identified during the inspection; and;
- The actions taken to remedy the unsafe conditions or practices.

After a serious accident, it is a perfect time to bolster your safety program. Awareness and receptivity will be very high right now. If you don't have an active safety committee, it would be a good time to start forming one. Get your employees involved in the safety process at your company.

## HealthFirst Pioneers In House Modified Duty

HealthFirst Medical is a pioneer when it comes to providing “In House Modified Duty”. The idea was conceived by our Medical Director, Ronald Crowell, M.D. Dr. Crowell believed that workers got better quicker if they were not taken off work. Many employers were unable to accommodate the injured worker’s work restrictions and therefore the employee was placed on temporary disability.

Dr. Crowell came up with the idea of providing Modified Duty at HealthFirst. This idea became a reality in 2001 when we had the first employee use the program. Since that time the program has been expanded and refined to better serve our employers by offering multiple shifts, a large classroom, lunchroom, and excellent staffing.

In 2003 Vons Distribution contracted HealthFirst to provide “In House Modified Duty “ for all their injured workers. Vons knew that injured workers got back to regular duty faster if they participated in this program thus saving the company a great deal of money on their workers compensation insurance.

HealthFirst takes great pride in the success of this program. We provide a proven program that has reduced injuries in the workplace and gotten injured workers back to work quicker. You might ask how this program could possibly reduce a companies injuries. The fact is that employees know that if they are injured they will be going to the “In House Modified Duty” at HealthFirst and not going home to sit in front of the T.V. This program has acted as a deterrent to work injuries. Because the program is very structured and the patients are required to do work all day, they are anxious to get back their regular job.

There is a copy cat program being offered by a competitor. They may be offering reduced rates to get your injury business. Please be assured that the reduction you are given will be made up by increased visits on the injury side. A company cannot offer services for free and stay in business.

## Surviving in a Down Economy

As we all know the state of the economy for the remainder of 2008 and into 2009 is not great. We are in a recession and all companies are having to tighten their belts and cut cost where they can. The question is what and where should you make those cuts.

One way to cut costs is to remove waste in every aspect of your business. Look everywhere for savings. Question every type of expense. Your mantra should be “Think Frugal”. Before authorizing any expense, ask yourself if this expenditure will contribute to maximizing your bottom line in the near future. If it won’t, put it off. Every dollar you can save is a dollar of profit.

In an effort to help companies contain costs, HealthFirst Medical continues to hold constant, prices for physicals services. Our basic post offer physical has been the same price for the last 20 years. We don’t think you can find services from an other company that have remain constant for that length of time. As much as we would like to be able to reduce these prices we can’t as our operating expenses continue to go up.

## Prevent the Flu

The single best way to prevent the seasonal flu is to get a vaccination each year, but good health habits can help as well. Follow these tips:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home from work when you are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing
- Washing you hands often will help protect you from germs
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink fluids and eat healthy.

**Please let your employees know that \$20 flu shots are available at HealthFirst. They may come in anytime between 7 AM and 7 PM at either clinic.**