

## Make This Year's Resolution Safety

With the new year many people make the traditional long list of resolutions. Why not carry the tradition into the workplace?

One of the most important issues to address is work safety. A safe environment ensures healthy employees and increased productivity. It is important to have a plan in mind for the upcoming year.

Employers are required to make sure the workplace is safe and the health of employees is not damaged.

This means:

- Making sure that the way work is done is safe and does not affect employees health;
- Making sure that tools, equipment and machinery are safe and kept safe;
- Making sure that ways of storing, transporting or working with dangerous materials and substances do not damage or endanger employees health;
- Provide employees with the information, instruction and training they need to do their job safely and with damaging their health;
- Consult with employees directly or through their health and safety representative about health and safety in the workplace;
- Check and monitor the work place regularly and keep a record of what is found during these checks.

Employees also have responsibilities under the health and safety laws. Typically, employees are required to:

- Follow instructions and rules in the workplace—for example, to comply with instruction designed to ensure that work is carried out safely;
- Work and behave in ways which are safe and do not endanger the health and safety of anyone in the workplace.

One proven way to keep safety awareness high in the workplace is to form a safety committee. The committee should consist of workers and management, each with equal representation. The committee should meet on a monthly to discuss and resolve safety issues in the workplace. Some of the duties of the committee are:



- To make sure there are policies and procedures on things such as: work with chemicals; how to report accidents and dangerous situations; buying safe equipment and machinery etc;
- Know about all the health and safety problems in the workplace—this will include workplace inspections, and studying reported accidents, illness, and workers comp claims;
- advising on: ways of checking the workplace for hazards; safe job procedures; what is needed to reduce or get rid of the unsafe or unhealthy situation in the workplace, etc;
- Checking that work procedures are properly protecting workers health and safety;
- Conduct workplace training about health and safety;
- Set up ways of solving disagreements or problems.

Safety is an ongoing concern. If the workplace is safe, work injuries should decline. In order to keep safety awareness high, companies should do repeated training throughout the year.

HealthFirst Medical Group has a full library of safety videos available to our companies. You may check out videos by call our marketing department at 562-926-3440 or 562-949-9328.

## Workers' Compensation Update on First Aid

First aid treatment is included as medical care that all employers must provide for their injured employees. In conjunction with the Dept. on Industrial Relations, Div. of Workers' Compensation, the California Dept. of Insurance wants to remind all employers, physicians, insurance carriers and self-insurers of the need to comply with Section 6409(a) of the California Labor Code.

Section 6409(a) requires a physician who treats an injured employee to file a DFR ("Doctor's First Report of Injury") with the claims administrator for every work illness or injury, even first aid cases where there is no lost time from work. Although the Labor Code contains "first aid" exceptions for Employers' Report and Employee Claim Form, there is no such exception for the DFR. The insurance carrier (or the employer if self-insured) must forward these DFR's to the Dept. of Industrial Relation. There is no "first aid" exception to this statute.

CDI and DIR believe there are improper arrangements in place between some medical providers and employers that allow the employer to dictate how injuries are to be classified by the physicians. In some cases, and at the request of employers, the physicians send the DFR only to the employers and not to the insurance carriers. This arrangement occurs even though the injuries clearly are beyond first aid. This agreement is often marketed to employers as a way to keep premiums from rising or to lower them. Such marketing practices are both improper and may also contribute to possible criminal violations related to premium fraud and the fraudulent denial of workers' compensation benefits to injured workers. (Source: Dept. of Industrial Relations)

## MPNs: What you need to know

One of the elements of SB 899 was the creation of Medical Provider Networks in the State of California workers' compensation system to extend the period of control over an injured worker. So what is an MPN?

An MPN is an entity or group of health care providers set up by an insurer or self-insured employer and approved by the Division of Workers' Compensation's administrative director to treat workers injured on the job. Each MPN must include a mix of doctors specializing in work-related injuries and doctors with expertise in general areas of medicine. MPNs are required to meet access to care standards for common occupational injuries and work-related illnesses. Further, the regulations require MPNs to follow all medical treatment guidelines established by the DWC and must allow employees a choice of provider(s) in the network after their first visit. MPNs also must offer an opportunity for second and third opinions if the injured worker disagrees with the diagnosis or treatment offered by the treating physician. If a disagreement still exists after the second and third opinion a covered employee in the MPN may request an independent medical review (IMR). MPN coverage began on January 1, 2005 for approved plans. If you have questions regarding MPN, call HealthFirst.

(Source: Dept. of Industrial Relations)

### Changes in Company Information?

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Carrier: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Fax Changes to 562-926-0592**



**MEDICAL GROUP, Inc.**

13440 E. Imperial Hwy.  
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670