

# Bits & Pieces

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## An Event You Won't Forget

By: David L. Dolenar  
Deputy Executive Officer

The fifth annual **Wellness and Safety Fair** is only three months away and we have planned an event you won't forget for a long time. To assist you with your wellness and safety training needs, following is a brief preview of some of the classes from which you may choose. We are currently planning seven classes under General Safety, ten classes under General Wellness and thirteen classes under Industrial Safety for a total of 30 classes.

In addition to the more popular classes of Street Survival, Ergonomics, Nutrition, CPR, Stress Survival and Motivation, which will continue to be offered, several new classes will be making their debut this year. These include:

- Fire Prevention/Fire Extinguisher Use
- Gangs/Drugs
- DOT-Alcohol/Drugs
- Fitness-Yoga
- Fitness-Tai Chi
- HazCom/MSDS
- Right to Know
- First Aid

The theme for this year's event will be a surprise for all! Improvements are being made to expand the number and quality of vendors, entertainment, and of course and most importantly, **THE FOOD!** You will be receiving more information in the weeks ahead, so mark your calendars now.

**May 22, 23 and 24, 2001**

**"An Event You Won't Forget"**

## A New Vision of Life for You

By: Barbara Cooper  
Employee Benefits Manager

Many of us consider sight our most precious sense. Yet a remarkable number of us depend on corrective aids like glasses and contact lenses to help us see the world. In fact, about 50% of us wear glasses or contacts, and for many, it dramatically affects our lifestyle.

As a Vision Service Plan (VSP) member, the opportunity to have laser vision correction surgery has arrived for many who are farsighted, nearsighted or who have astigmatism. Many of you may already be considering this new procedure, which uses an excimer laser to improve vision by reshaping the cornea, or front surface of the eye. You and your eligible dependents may now have access to VSP's Laser VisionCare Program.

VSP has arranged for members to receive the procedure at a **discounted fee**, which could add up to hundreds of dollars in savings. The most you will pay is \$1,500 per eye for PRK or \$1,800 per eye for LASIK.

VSP is committed to providing you with the facts about laser vision correction. Laser vision correction is a surgical procedure, so the decision to have it should be made carefully. VSP has teamed with TLC Laser Eye Centers, one of the industry's most experienced laser vision correction providers, as part of VSP's Laser VisionCare Learning Source, to bring you comprehensive laser vision correction information.

The VSP's **discounts program** through TLC Laser Eye Centers and Stanislaus County's Flexible Spending Account program are a perfect fit to save employee dollars. For more information on Laser surgery and the network of TLC Laser Eye Centers go to [VSP.com](http://VSP.com). For more information on Flexible Spending Accounts, go to [creativebenefits.com](http://creativebenefits.com).

# Calling all Supervisors

By: Peggy J. Huntsinger  
Disability Manager

The CEO-Risk Management Division has developed a course targeting areas of concern for all supervisors in our County. This course is not just for the new supervisor but also for the seasoned veteran. We will review Violence in the Workplace, How to File a Workers' Compensation Claim, What is Disability Management?, How to Conduct an Accident Investigation, and review various leave policies including Family and Medical Leave. We have assembled a comprehensive training and reference manual and have 4MATed the class. We expect that you will learn a great deal and have some fun while doing so. The Risk Management 101 for Supervisors class will be held the second Thursday of every month in Harvest Hall at the Agricultural Center from 8:30 to 4:30. For registration call Pat Wade at 525-5780.

## Tips on how to run a good meeting

Have you ever attended a meeting when everyone wants to express themselves and then chaos takes over? Listed below are suggestions that might be helpful:

- **Don't** compete with group members. Give their ideas precedence over yours.
- **Listen** to everyone. Paraphrase, but don't judge.
- **Don't** put anyone on the defensive. Assume that everyone's ideas have value.
- **Control** the dominant people without alienating them.
- **Realize** that your interest and alertness are contagious.
- **Keep** all participants informed about where they are and what's expected of them. Keep notes on flip charts or a board that everyone can see.
- **Check** with the person who owns the problem to find out if an idea is worth pursuing or if a proposed solution is satisfactory.
- **Give** others a turn at running the meeting. Those who learn to lead learn how to participate.

Source:

*Financial Times, 14 E. 60<sup>th</sup> St., New York, NY 10022*

# Winning the Game: A Team Effort

By: David L. Dolenar  
Deputy Executive Officer

For over five years there have been numerous policies, procedures and programs developed to prevent and/or minimize the County's losses. Losses, which I refer to, are primarily associated with injuries and damages. Loss control is a pre-loss strategy and suggests the reduction of frequency (how many) and severity (costs) of potential losses through prevention techniques and the identification of loss causing events. It also suggests taking measures to ensure that losses are kept to a minimum when an event occurs.

In the loss prevention/control game there are some risk management techniques that can be used by every member of our workforce team.

- **Exposure Avoidance** – This eliminates entirely any possibility of loss. It is achieved by either abandoning or never undertaking an activity or an asset that is determined to be unsafe.
- **Loss Prevention** – This strives to reduce loss frequency without completely eliminating the asset or activity that may produce losses. This is the most desired technique to control losses, provided that the costs of prevention are less than the reduction in the losses that would otherwise have occurred.
- **Loss Reduction** - This includes all measures to reduce the severity of losses and begins with well-prepared pre-loss plans that specify exactly what should be done, by whom, immediately after a loss occurs.
- **Separation of Loss Exposure Units** – This merely separates or duplicates assets or activities so that no single event can cause a loss to all of them.
- **Transfer the Risk** – This is done through an agreement and shifts the ownership or responsibility for an asset or activity to another party.

These are simple techniques, which everyone can understand and are common sense oriented. My challenge to you is that you think about these five areas as you perform your duties and responsibilities in your current position and determine if what you are doing is practical, risk free and safe.

***Let's all work together safely to win  
this game as a team! !***

# TAKING SAFETY TO THE NEXT LEVEL

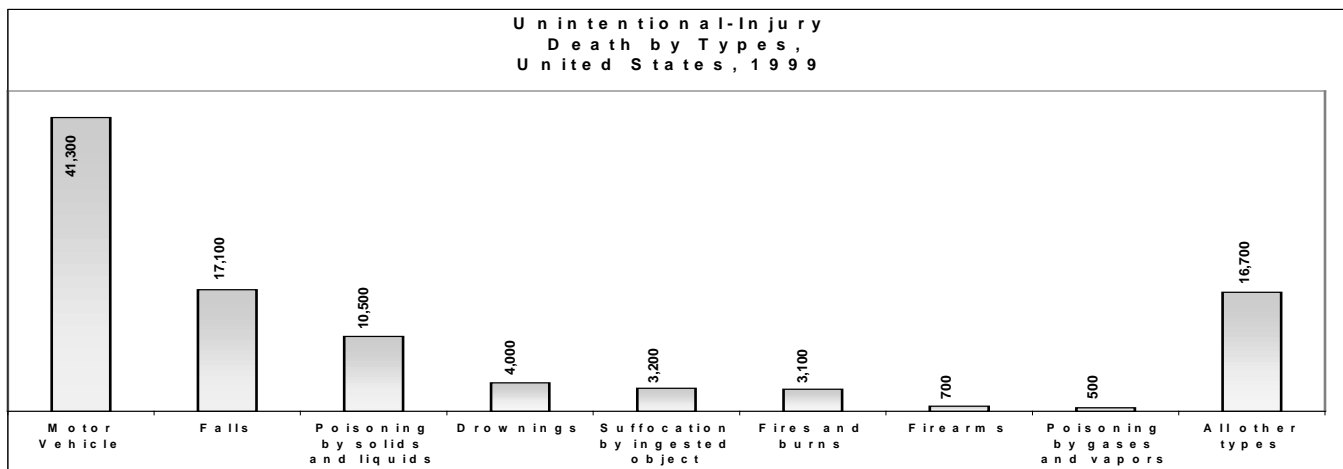
By: David Becker  
Safety Officer

Many people rarely think about safety, when in reality safety is everyone's responsibility. Safety should be in the forefront of everyone's mind, from an employee working on the job, a parent caring for his or her children, to a homeowner checking for unsafe conditions in his or her home.

Listed to the right are six steps for identifying risk factors for safety:

1. Identify the Hazards
2. Assess the Risks
3. Analyze Risk Control Measures
4. Make Controlled Decisions
5. Implement Risk Controls
6. Supervise and Review

The first step is **hazard identification**. The following chart is provided by the National Safety Council Statistical Department, to help you identify common hazards:



After you have identified your hazards, you should **assess your risks**. In the above chart you will see how we relate to the following:

- We all drive vehicles.
- We all climb stairs.
- We all deal with hazardous materials that can either be absorbed through our skin or we could breathe.
- Many of us spend large amounts of time in and around the water.
- Have you ever eaten a piece of hard candy and choked?
- Fires are a constant potential hazard in our world, be it in the kitchen or with houses that are made of flammable materials.
- Firearms are constant in our society.

As you perform your hazard identification assessment, you will note we share many of the

same dangers on a daily basis.

**Policies and procedures** have been developed to address many of the hazards listed above, and are found in your Stanislaus County Safety Manual.

Ongoing training courses are scheduled to provide a better understanding of the many dangers that face each and every one of us:

- First Aid/CPR
- Defensive Driver Program
- Ergonomics (Office & Back)
- Hazardous Materials Awareness
- Hazardous Materials Operational
- Water Safety Training
- Taking Care of Yourself (New Employee Orientation)
- Wellness and Safety Fair classes

**Policies and procedures** and training courses are there to help you to **analyze risk control** measures.

The most important thing you can do is to **make "controlled decisions"**. All the policies and procedures or training classes in the world will not do anything, if we do not make decisions based on information we observe and learn. We **must implement changes** in our lives.

When we look at injuries that happen in Stanislaus County, many of them occur because we as employees, supervisors, and managers have not **made "controlled decisions"** and have not **implemented the risk control processes**. A simple example of this would be: Do you wear a life jacket while riding in a boat? Drowning is the number four cause of death or injury. Federal and State laws require life jackets to be in watercraft for every person on board the vessel. How many of us actually put them on?

Finally, we need to **supervise and review**. Safety steps and processes are worthless if we do not go back and examine if rules and regulations are being followed. I have observed people on the job mow the lawns around the county wearing safety shoes, hearing protection, and safety glasses. I've observed these same people go home and mow their own lawns in sandals, shorts, without eye protection, or hearing protection. What makes the risk at home, any less dangerous than the risk you face on the job? **There is no difference!** We have to stop and think: Have we truly made risk control decisions? Have we truly implemented risk control measures? This is a personal question we need to understand so that we can pass it on to our children. When we are ready to take safety to the next level, that next level is to personalize safety into our own lives and pass that on to our employees, co-workers and children.

**Let's all work together to make 2001 the safest year that any of us has ever experienced.**

## Did You Know?

By: *Ed Fenton*  
*Liability Claims / Insurance Manager*

As the availability of County cars has decreased, it has become more likely that employees may have to drive on County business using their own vehicle.

When driving your personal vehicle on the job, your insurance is primary. This means if you were in an accident, insurance covering your vehicle would take care of the claim up to your policy limits. If you are in an accident and the other party does not have insurance, it may be necessary for you to pay your deductible before your insurance company will repair your car.

Under the current procedures of the County, an employee may file a claim for his/her deductible if the accident happened while driving on County business. If you are involved in an accident, contact the Board of Supervisor's office at 525-6391 for a claim form to be sent to you. Submit the completed claim form to the Board of Supervisors and include proof of your deductible. The Board of Supervisors will forward your claim to the CEO-Risk Management Division for handling. If you have any questions please give me a call at 525-5711.

## The "Fine Print" To Increasing Your Supplemental Life Insurance.....

By: *Barbara Cooper*  
*Employee Benefits Manager*

During Stanislaus County's annual benefit open enrollment, employees have the opportunity to increase their supplemental life insurance.

Most employees are surprised to learn that the Life Insurance Company's Medical Underwriters might be contacting them requesting a blood and/or urine sample.

The Life Insurance's Medical Underwriting Department hires local nurses to make arrangements with our employees to come to their home or work location to collect the samples. The decision to ask for additional lab work depends on different factors including the answer to your medical questions or the amount of life insurance requested.

It is very important that if you are contacted by one of the nurses and wish to take care of the procedure during your lunch or break time, you should always inform your supervisor and get permission first before scheduling.

If you have questions concerning your benefits, please do not hesitate to contact the Employee Benefits Unit at 525-5717.