

BITS & PIECES

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Challenges

By: David I. Dolinar, Deputy Executive Officer



It is hard to believe that this year has gone by so fast. The weather has become colder and the Holiday Season is right around the corner. The year has been full of challenges, from the year-round preparation of the budget, changes in leadership both at the state and local levels, continuing terrorist outbreaks and local and statewide emergencies and disasters. All this makes one wonder what is in store for us in the future.

One thing we can be sure of is that we will continue to have challenges, both societal and personal, in every aspect of our lives. I suppose it is how we deal with these challenges that ultimately counts in the long run. It is important we recognize that our relationships with others can have positive benefits

in our lives regardless of our individual challenges.

It is during this time of year that we should step back and remember to count our benefits and think about those who have remembered us in our times of need. We should be grateful in recognizing how the efforts of others have benefited our lives and letting them know how greatly we value their kindness and friendship.

The Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays will be challenging again this year if we allow it. On the other hand, we can approach the holiday season with gratefulness and thoughtfulness and be appreciative for all that we have and for those who have truly benefited us in our lives.

Inside this issue:

Skin Cancer Warning	2
The ABCDs of Melanoma	2
Winter Safety Tips	2
Making Safety Training Successful	3
Kaiser—Growing Community Wellness	3
Did you know...	4
Health & Safety Training Survey	4



Have a bountiful
Thanksgiving,
a very
Merry Christmas
and a prosperous
New Year.

From the Staff
of the CEO -Risk
Management Division.

Workers' Compensation Charts & Graphs on the Internet

By: Peggy Huntsinger, disability manager

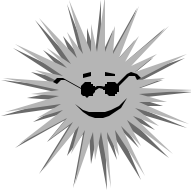
Stanislaus County continues to provide Workers' Compensation to employees who sustain either an On the Job Injury and or Illness that arises out of employment through our Self Insurance Fund. Being self-insured means that every dollar spent on a WC claim is a county



dollar. We do have excess insurance for injuries that are catastrophic in nature. Visit our web site at <http://www.co.stanislaus.ca.us/riskmgt/index.htm> to view annualized Workers' Compensation statistics to see how we are doing in managing our self-insurance program.

Skin Cancer Warning

By: Dixie Barrigar, rn, medical review nurse



Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States today. The incidence of skin cancer has more than tripled in the last 20 years. This year alone, more than 1.3 million people will be diagnosed.

Skin cancers come in 3 forms and are caused by exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun and/or tanning beds. Basal cell cancer usually appears on the head (especially the nose), neck, or hands. It looks like a small pearly pimple that doesn't go away, and may begin to ulcerate in the center. These can be very small, and while they don't metastasize easily they can grow locally and deeply into the skin.

Squamous cell cancers often look like a sore that doesn't heal and usually appears as a red, scaly patch or bump, often on the rim of the ear, the face, the lips, and mouth—any exposed area of skin. Squamous cell cancers have 3 percent chance of spreading.

Melanoma, the most deadly form of skin cancer, arises in melanocytes, the pigmented cells that give skin its color. In 2003, it is estimated that about 54,000 Americans will be diagnosed with melanoma and approximately 7,700 people will die as a result. According to the CDC, well-established risk factors for skin cancer include family history of skin cancer,

fair skin, red or blonde hair, propensity to burn and an inability to tan. Preventable risk factors include intermittent or cumulative exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation. The classic signs of melanoma are an asymmetrical shape, irregular border, uneven color (ranging from black to red), and a diameter bigger than a pencil eraser. But any change in a mole can be a warning sign. Watch for a change in size, in the surface or color of a mole, scaliness, oozing, bleeding, a change in the surrounding skin, or a change in sensation, including itching, tenderness or pain.

The CDC reports that the most preventable risk factor for skin cancer is unprotected UV exposure. Yet at least 50% of children and adults do not protect themselves adequately from exposure to the sun's UV rays. While knowledge of the risk of UV exposure and the use of sun screen and other forms of skin protection have improved over the past 2 decades, a gap still exists between knowledge and behavior.

Be sure to have any suspicious skin lesion checked out by a dermatologist. Basal cell and squamous cell cancers are cured by surgical removal, and if melanoma is removed when it is small, the cure rate is over 90 percent. But if malignant melanoma is not caught early, even if it has been removed surgically, it still has the potential to spread to other parts of the body. It can be deadly. So, it is critical that it be detected and treated as early as possible.

The ABCDs of melanoma



Asymmetry - one half unlike the other half



Color varied - from one area to another; shades of tan and brown; black; sometimes white, red or blue



Border irregular - scalloped or poorly circumscribed border



Diameter larger - than 6 mm as a rule (diameter of a pencil eraser).

Winter Safety Tips

Submitted by: ed Fenton, liability claims/insurance manager

The following winter fire safety tips will help you and your loved ones get through another cold season safely:

- * **Insulation**—In this age of high energy costs, adding insulation to your house can save you energy, but it could also lead to a fire. Your fire chief advises you to have your home electrical system checked and have deficiencies corrected by a qualified electrician, especially before installing insulation.



- * **Fuel-burning furnace**—Your furnace flue must be inspected regularly. Your furnace gives off heat and something else too—carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide gas has often been described as the 'silent killer'. Clear, colorless and tasteless, it is difficult to detect.
- * **Smoke detectors**—Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially outside each bedroom. If your detectors are battery operated, check the batteries often to make sure the units are operational.

Making safety training successful

By: David Becker, safety officer



Supervisors are key to any safety-training program. Supervisors should be providing employees with job safety, fire prevention, and health training as required by the California Occupational Safety and Health Program (Ca-OSHA). For administrative areas, safety training may be as simple as handing out pamphlets, magazines, posters and newsletters. For industrial areas, safety

training might cover workplace specific or hazard specific areas. As a supervisor, sometimes you may have to be creative and inventive when conducting training, but the bottom line is getting the message to your personnel in the workplace. Supervisors must also provide safety training to newly assigned individuals. Safety training is the tool used to inform personnel and make them aware of the potential hazards in the workplace.

The Chief Executive Office - Risk Management Division, Safety Unit has many different tools to help Supervisors meet their training needs. These tools include the following:

1. Stanislaus County Safety Manual Tab 3 pages 18, 20, 49 & 50 has forms that Supervisors can use to keep track of employees training records.
2. Stanislaus County Safety Manual Tab 3 page 51 has a list of required training for special workplace hazards.
3. Stanislaus County Safety Manual Tab 3 page 47 has a particle list of classes that are offered by the CEO-Risk Management Division, Safety Unit.

4. Stanislaus County Safety Manual Tab 22 has a list of Videos, Interactive CD ROMS on several different subjects, and training outlines with handouts, overheads and tests.

Supervisors must document all safety, health and environmental training.

Supervisors should prepare a comprehensive job safety-training outline. This training is to be provided initially; upon reassignment; or when there is a change in equipment, processes, substances, or new work conditions. This initial training also applies to workers who are part-time, temporary, or detailed to the organization. When the training is completed, annotate the type of training, date provided, and signed by both the worker and supervisor. Then summarize the type of training covered.

Supervisors should complete inspection checklists as needed and conduct safety inspections of their work areas annually. It is recommended that the Department head conduct his/her Annual Safety Inspection around March or April. In doing so, they will know if they have to budget for hazard abatement and/or repairs. The inspection results must be documented and a copy sent to the County Safety Officer

For more information on safety training requirements, contact the County Safety Officer at 525-5781.

Kaiser ~ growing community wellness

Submitted by: Barbara cooper, employees benefits manager



Now you've got two new places in Modesto for high-quality health care. Our new Bangs Avenue and Dale Road Medical Offices offer convenient hours and more specialties to serve you better.

Bangs Avenue Medical Offices

4125 Bangs Ave., Modesto

- Departments: Adult Medicine, Pediatrics, Women's Health, Health Education, Laboratory, and Member Services
- Open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Dale Road Medical Offices

3800 Dale Road, Modesto

- Departments: Adult Medicine, Dermatology, Gastroenterology, Occupational Medicine, Neurology, Podiatry, Medical Orthopedics, Radiology, Health Education, Pharmacy, Member Services, and Urgent Care
- Open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., by appointment. Pharmacy: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.; week-ends and holidays, 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Laboratory: 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m., seven days a week
- Urgent care: by appointment, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year

To schedule an appointment at either facility or for more information, call **209-557-1650**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To reach Spanish-speaking representatives, call **1-877-KP-SALUD (1-877-577-2583)**.

To select a personal physician or nurse practitioner, call Member Outreach and Tran-Services at **1-866-880-KPMD** or **1-800-777-1370** (TTY for the hearing impaired) .

