

# BITS & PIECES

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## HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING – 2006

By David L. Dolanar, Deputy Executive Officer



The annual Health and Safety Training event will be held March 14 – 16, 2006. Planning is underway and we hope to provide you with classes that are beneficial in the workplace and at home.

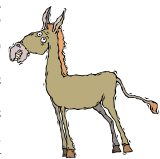
We will continue to offer the basic courses that are required by law. Some of these include Injury Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) and Security/Violence in the Workplace. Others are Slip/Trip and

Fall, Disaster Preparation, Ergonomics for Life, Fire Extinguisher Training, Car Seat Safety and Driver Improvement. In the health area, we are planning classes which would include Bloodborne Pathogens, Infectious/Communicable Disease, Healthy Heart, Foot/Ankle, Knees, and Hearing Conservation.

We will be providing more information as our planning progresses. Please mark your calendars now for Health and Safety Training on March 14 – 16, 2006.

## BELIEF IS ALL YOU NEED

A man was lost while driving through the county. As he tried to read a map, he accidentally drove off the road into a ditch. Though he wasn't injured, his car was stuck deep in the mud. So the man walked to a nearby farm to ask for help.



The farmer hitched the mule to the car. With a snap of the reins he shouted, "Pull, Fred! Pull, Jack! Pull, Ted! Pull, Warwick!" And the mule pulled the car from the ditch with very little effort.

"Warwick can get you out that ditch," said the farmer, pointing to an old mule standing in a field. The man looked at the haggardly mule and looked at the farmer who just stood there repeating, "Yep, old Warwick can do the job." The man figured he had nothing to lose. The two men and Warwick made their way back to the ditch.

The man was amazed. He thanked the farmer, patted the mule and asked, "Why did you call out all of those other names before you call Warwick?"

The farmer grinned and said, "Old Warwick is just about blind. As long as he believes he's part of a team, he doesn't mind pulling."

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Happy Holidays!



**If you spend your whole life waiting for the storm, you'll never enjoy the sunshine.**

*Morris West, Writer*

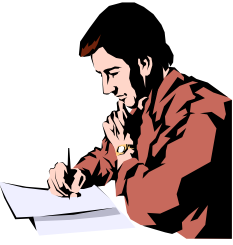


**How you spend your time is more important than how you spend your money. Money mistakes can be corrected, but time is gone forever.**

*David B. Norris*

## A LIVING WILL

*Submitted by: Barbara Cooper, Employee Benefits Manager*



Earlier this year, Americans found themselves focused on Terry Schiavo, a Florida woman whose husband and parents became locked in a legal battle over whether or not to sustain Terry's life using a feeding tube. No matter where you stood on this issue, the important lesson we all learned is that having a living will is essential to having your wishes respected. A living will is an important legal document. It describes the type and degree of medical care you want in the event that you're extremely ill or injured and can't communicate these wishes.

Many people have yet to create a living will – after all, legal fees are expensive, and why worry if you're healthy? But it's important to consider the cost – financially and emotionally – to your loved ones who are left to make decisions when you cannot. The cost to Terry Schiavo's husband and parents was not just expensive legal fees but also years of anguish battling each other over what they thought was best for her. This is a situation that most of us would never want to happen in our families.

Today, while you're able to express your wishes, take the time to ensure they're documented and legally binding. Talk to an attorney you trust about creating living wills for yourself, your parents, your spouse and other adult family members. It's also worthwhile to ask about durable powers of attorney, health care durable powers of attorney, financial durable powers of attorney and health care directives – other legal documents that help ensure your wishes are followed. Be sure to take a copy of your living will to your physician's office or to the hospital if you are scheduled for surgery, so that this important document can be added to your medical records.

Don't wait to protect yourself. You and your family will have greater peace of mind when you make your desires known now.

*Information from: Janet Boling, A Solution for Caregivers*

## A CLEAN MOUSE MEANS EASY POINTING

*By: John Turner, Safety Representative, Community Service Agency*

If you have a mouse with a ball on the bottom, this may be helpful. Newer mice (mice?) don't require this kind of care.

Dust, dirt and debris get picked up and deposited inside the mouse, making it difficult to move the cursor. Cursing the cursor doesn't help, though it may relieve tension. Banging the mouse on the mouse pad provides similar results.

Regular scraping and cleaning of the rollers inside the mouse makes it easier to use and helps the hand to relax while working.

First, turn the mouse over on its back and loosen the cover by turning counter-clockwise. Remove the cover and take out the ball.

Clean the cover and ball. A tissue or a soft cloth should work. If a mild cleaning fluid is used, be sure it does not leave a residue, and dry all parts completely.

Notice the three rollers inside the mouse housing (A, B, C). These are most important to clean. You can use your fingernail to get the big chunks off. Be sure to turn the rollers, so

all surfaces are reached. A damp tissue or cloth may help, but be sure to get all traces of dust and dirt off the rollers and out of the belly of the mouse.

Put the ball back in and replace the cover by turning clockwise to lock in place.

Your mouse should now work like new.



(c) Helpwithpcs.com



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## TIPS TO HELP SAVE ON HOME HEATING BILLS

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



Just plugging the air leaks in your home can save you 10 percent on your heating bill. And that can be relatively inexpensive. Long-term solutions will save you more.

If you replace the siding on your home, add an extra layer of insulation.

For a few dollars you can buy weather stripping for around the windows and doors. Apply easy-to-use tubes of caulking, or caulking tapes, and wraps for the hot water pipes.

Replace old drafty windows and install new thermal ones.

If you permanently set back your thermostat one-degree, it can save you up to 3 percent on your bill. It is also recommended that you set it back when you're not home and at night to a 5 to 10 degree set back from the normal temperature. Installing a new digital thermostat can make it easier to monitor and adjust temperatures.

Check the furnace and clean or change the filter for greater efficiency.

Cold air can be getting into your home in a way you have probably not even considered -- through the outlets and switches.

To check them, wet your hand and hold it in front of the plate. If you feel air, you have a problem. But what can you do about it?

You can purchase a package of 40 plate insulators for less than \$4 at most home and hardware stores. If you did all the receptacles and switch-plates around the whole house you can affect the energy efficiency in your home anywhere from 10 to 15 percent.

Inexpensive air-conditioner quilts can reduce drafts.

If you have a ceiling fan, don't forget to reverse the blades to push down the hot air in the winter.

Also, an energy saver furnace can make a difference in the bill each month.

*Information from: wnbc.com*

## WINTER SAFETY

By: *David Becker, Safety Officer*

It won't be long now until winter arrives. Rain, fog and at times ice in the valley. Snow and ice in the hills. Even in California we need to keep up on the weather reports in the wintertime and be ready.



- \* We need to allow more time to get places (it takes twice as long to stop on wet roads).
- \* Winter driving demands that we drive both carefully and defensively. In the fog turn your lights on and slow down.
- \* We need to dress for the weather. Cotton, when wet, offers no thermal protection. Office wear may be sufficient if we end up walking. We need something to keep us dry and warm should trouble strike. Wool is a good choice.
- \* Vehicles need a little TLC. Check the battery, tires, lights and windshield wipers/washers.
- \* When we drive to the hills remember thermal underwear,

a coat and hood, good warm socks and gloves will be needed if you have car trouble.

- \* Falls are a major cold weather safety concern. Even in the valley ice can be a problem. Watch for it as you are walking in to work in the morning. Report any problems to your supervisor so the area can be sanded.
- \* Look at your shoes. Good traction is always a must but when the walk is covered in water with a little car oil it becomes more important. Ice again can be less of a problem with a good non-slip shoe sole.
- \* You may want a little more heat but watch out, approximately 3,500 deaths occur each year due to home fires. Heaters can be nice but cause some problems. Keep them at least three feet away from other flammable objects, including walls. Also, they can become a trip hazard.

**STANISLAUS COUNTY  
CEO-RISK MANAGEMENT DIVISION**

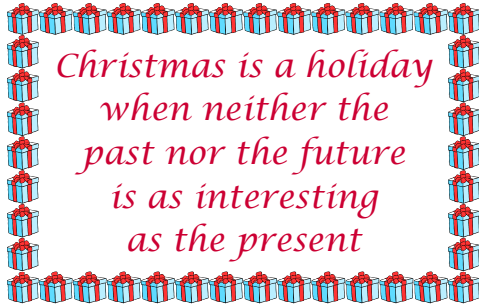
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*Did you know...*

- \* The very first jack o' lantern was made out of a turnip.
- \* Orange and black became Halloween colors because orange is associated with harvests and black is associated with death.
- \* Witch means wise one. It comes from the Saxon word wica. Witches were thought to be wise enough to tell the future
- \* Benjamin Franklin wanted the national bird to be a turkey
- \* Domesticated turkeys (farm raised) cannot fly. Wild turkeys can fly for short distances at up to 55 miles per hour. Wild turkeys are also fast on the ground, running at speeds of up to 25 miles per hour.
- \* Christmas became a national holiday in America on June, 26, 1870.
- \* The first president to decorate the white house Christmas tree in the United States was Franklin Pierce
- \* "It's a Wonderful Life" appears on TV more often than any other holiday movie.
- \* Coca Cola was the first beverage company to use Santa for a winter promotion.
- \* Gingerbread houses became popular holidays gifts during the 19th century after The Brothers Grimm released the story of Hansel & Gretel.
- \* New Year Resolutions are simply another way to wish away the past in exchange for hopes of the future. It is where the phrase "turning over a new leaf" originated.

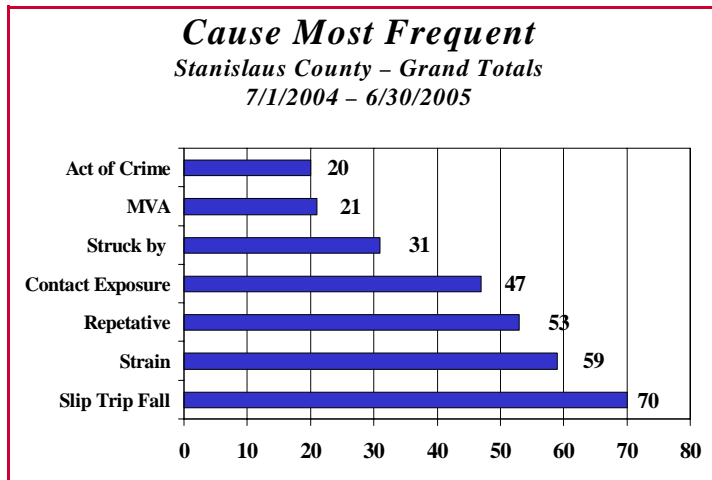
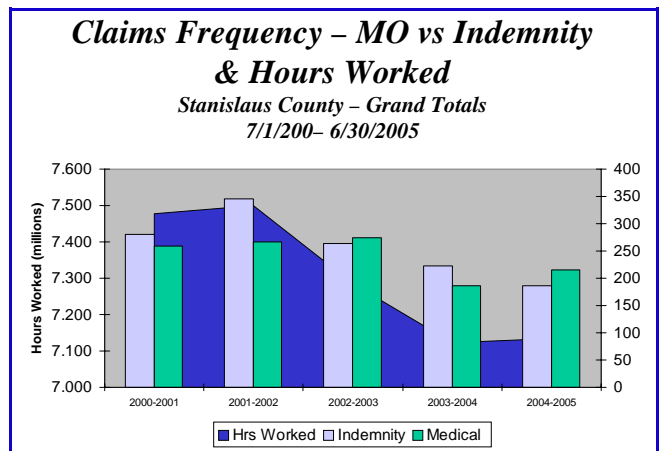


*Christmas is a holiday  
when neither the  
past nor the future  
is as interesting  
as the present*

**WORKERS' COMPENSATION YEAR END CHARTS**

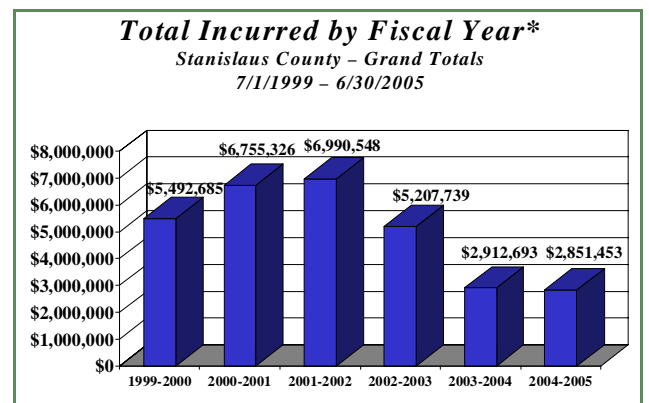
*By: Peggy Huntsinger, Disability Manager*

⇒ The good news is, claims frequency continues to decline. The chart at the right illustrates the number of claims with injury dates compared to the number of hours worked countywide. Please note, there are times when claims with older injury dates are reported after the year has officially closed, so these numbers can be fluid.



⇒ The most frequent cause of loss continues to be slip/trip/fall followed by strain and repetitive motion. Safety training classes are offered to help reduce these types of injuries. Check out the course offerings for the Health and Safety training March 14, 15 and 16, 2006.

⇒ Incurred costs are estimated values for the life of a claim. The estimated value will evolve over time. The value will increase if there is a need for surgery or if the employee is not recovering as quickly as initially anticipated. The value may decrease as well, depending on how the claim progresses.



Our incurred costs have continued to decline – keep up the good work.