

Risk Services Newsletter

SUMMER 2020

2 Million Face Coverings Headed to Ohio Workers

Protecting Ohio's Workforce- We've Got You Covered

Governor Mike DeWine announced on May 19, 2020 that he is sending at least 2 million face coverings to employers and workers across the state to weaken the impact of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) on the safety and health of Ohioans.

Governor DeWine announced the plan, called Protecting Ohio's Workforce — We've Got You Covered, during his daily media briefing on the pandemic, saying the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) would fund the initiative and send the non-medical-grade face coverings in batches over several weeks, beginning this week.

"As we reopen many of our businesses, we must remember that the virus is still with us and we need to continue taking safety precautions to keep ourselves and others near us safe," said Governor DeWine.

The shipments target Ohio employers covered by BWC that are in good standing and report payroll to the agency. Employers will not be billed for the items. The face coverings average less than a dollar a piece and will be funded from BWC's existing budget with no impact to employer premiums.

"This is our latest response to support our employer community and workforce through this public health emergency, and I'm sure we're not done yet," said BWC Administrator/CEO Stephanie McCloud. "We are working to secure additional supplies so we can send even more face coverings in the weeks ahead."

Among other efforts to mitigate COVID-19's impact, BWC gave Ohio employers nearly \$1.6 billion in late April to help their bottom line. Funded by investment returns and other savings, the dividend equaled 100% of the premiums employers paid in policy year 2018. Other efforts under Governor DeWine's direction can be found on BWC's COVID-19 Information page at bwc.ohio.gov for more.

For more on COVID-19, including prevention guidelines and its impact on Ohio, visit the Ohio Department of Health website coronavirus.ohio.gov.

For questions about BWC as it relates to COVID-19, please visit bwc.ohio.gov or email them at BWCCOVID19@bwc.state.oh.us.

Source: BWC

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Workplace Exposures to COVID-19

Recording cases of COVID-19

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), COVID-19 can be a recordable illness if a worker is infected as a result of performing their work-related duties. However, employers are only responsible for recording cases of COVID-19 if all of the following are true:

1. The case is a confirmed case of COVID-19 (see [CDC information](#) on persons under investigation and presumptive positive and laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19);
2. The case is work-related (as defined by 29 CFR 1904.5); and
3. The case involves one or more of the general recording criteria set forth in 29 CFR 1904.7 (e.g., medical treatment beyond first aid, days away from work).

Visit OSHA's [Injury and Illness Recordkeeping and Reporting Requirements page](#) for more information.

Source: OSHA

Safety Academy Webinars

CompManagement is offering FREE Safety Academy webinars. This session will count as one hour of credit towards the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) safety training requirement for employers participating in a group program. Clients required by BWC to take two hours of safety training have been contacted directly by CompManagement.

Improving Safety Through Employee Engagement

Move beyond employee satisfaction and improve safety by engaging your employees! In this presentation, John Valentine, Loss Control and Safety Consultant at CompManagement, explores business management topics that can help employers improve safety. This webinar is designed for business owners, safety professionals, human resource professionals, supervisors and managers.

**June
12**

**11:00 am - 12:00 pm
(EST/EDT)**

REGISTER NOW!

Safety Guidelines for "Re-Opening Ohio" Businesses

This presentation covers the required general protocols for all employers in Ohio as well as the sector specific operating requirements for: • General Office Environments • Consumer, Retail, & Services • Manufacturing, Distribution, & Construction • Public Entities • and Additional best practices which will assist employers from any industry in complying with and exceeding the mandatory guidelines/protocols.

**June
22**

**2:00 pm - 3:00 pm
(EST/EDT)**

REGISTER NOW!

Doing Better Today Than You Did Yesterday

In the first edition of this column, I presented the guiding principle of The Business Approach to Safety Management. Increasing injury rates and associated costs are symptoms of business administration problems. To expand upon this principle, the next few editions defined moral versus morale hazards, explored the impact of business ethics on safety performance, and encouraged leveraging compassion for safety improvement. This issue will build upon these concepts by focusing on the business administration challenges of developing a culture of safety in the workplace.

Developing a superior workplace safety culture is multi-disciplinary. Safety culture must be adapted to each workplace's distinctive challenges, yet we can find best practices for guidance. Don't be put off by trying to achieve a superior workplace safety culture immediately. Implementing successful strategies over time makes it less daunting and will produce results that stick. The topic I'll focus on in this issue can often be overlooked by organizations that seek to improve their safety culture—the integration between your safety and transitional work programs.

A common trait of great companies with superior workplace safety cultures is constant attention to doing better today than they did yesterday to prevent injuries. They also accept that there will be setbacks (injuries) and the need for compassion, ethics, and morals. Another trait of such companies is having low workers' compensation costs because they support the recovery and safe transition back to work for injured workers. There is no question that supporting injured workers as they transition back to work improves outcomes and reduces costs.

To appreciate the mindset of doing better every day, consider the great football coach Vince Lombardi who instructed his championship teams, "Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing." Lombardi's expectation was that his players commit to doing their best every day. He also said "Perfection is not attainable. But if we chase perfection, we can catch excellence." He knew humans are flawed, with failure and setbacks inevitable, yet constant dedication is a winning strategy. Lombardi understood that the mindset or culture is what drives success and overcoming adversity is just as essential to

achievement. Without question, organizations will miss their sales projections, lose customers and despite their best efforts, accidents and injuries will happen. But when they do, the organization must immediately refocus on doing better with safety than they did yesterday and help the injured worker to recover. Striking the balance between continuous improvement and compassion produces great results for safety culture and reduces the cost and impact of injuries.

I prefer to represent the concept of integrating your safety and transitional work programs as a formula: Injury Prevention = Caring. Caring = Return to Work Support. Caring is the common factor. A workers' compensation injury is a setback for the injured worker and their employer. The injured worker must take the time to heal, deal with the stress of personal financial impacts, and often a difficult change to their daily routine, impacting family members and co-workers. This should be recognized by the employer. Employer impacts include deploying already limited resources to further ensure the safety of workers and to also facilitate the injured worker's safe and swift return. Other business problems may develop as a result of a workplace injury including production delays, labor-management relation difficulties, or even lost customers. All of which have a negative impact on profits and morale. But a company that champions continuous improvement for safety can avoid such problems and would do well to ensure injured workers know that supportive transitional work is not a punishment but rather a form of caring. Consider how you are presenting your transitional work program to your workforce.

I have found the following best practices to be very effective in integrating transitional work programs with a supportive safety culture.

Safety Training as a Transitional Work Position

Develop a job analysis to communicate the physical restrictions of a transitional work release where the employee will participate in taking safety training or performing safety administration functions as their job. This key element involves the injured worker's physician and details the physical requirements of administrative tasks that need to be performed to support safety program activities. For example,

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after completing some low-cost online training or attending low cost or free classes, employees can help with such tasks as completing job hazard analyses (JHAs), updating Safety Data Sheets (SDS), inspecting fire extinguishers, etc. This will not work for every case but is a good option and a direct integration of safety and transitional work. Employees can receive OSHA 10-hour and 30-hour training completion cards as well as other safety certifications while on transitional duty and use that training to benefit the employer's safety program after a full duty release. Employers can use this approach to focus on preventing the type of injury the injured worker experienced. For example, an employee experiencing a back injury from lifting a heavy object spent several days cataloging tasks at his employer's facility where employees were lifting over 50 pounds or getting into awkward postures. This information was then used by the safety committee to focus on overexertion and ergonomic injury prevention. In a safety culture, this effort is meaningful. Good safety managers always have a list of tasks they would tackle if they had more manpower. Planning, coordination, and some creativity are required to successfully utilize safety training as a transitional work position. While not right for every employer or every injured worker it can be beneficial for many.

Safety Training Before Transitional Work

Prior to starting any transitional work position, the worker must receive appropriate safety training as to not cause any aggravation of the existing injury or a new injury. This obvious step is often overlooked and not performed. Employers with a superior safety culture should ensure that a thorough new hire safety orientation exists and is performed for injured transitional workers. To ensure appropriate training is completed create a Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) for each position which details its steps, the associated hazards, and the protective measures. Then train the employee on the JHA prior to starting the new job. For many employers, a JHA or equivalent is required to meet the OSHA Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) standards and they must be updated if the job changes. A superior safety culture provides safety training prior to assigning an injured worker to transitional duty. Furthermore, the injured worker should be encouraged to communicate about safety concerns without fear of reprisal while on transitional duty. They should know who they can speak to about concerns and the interaction should be positive and supportive, if or when it occurs.

Engaging and Useful Transitional Work

I still often hear of employers using unpleasant transitional work positions to prod the worker into seeking a full duty release to return to their original job. Worker's compensation veterans recall stories of counting paperclips or other tedious tasks. In a superior safety culture that embraces continuous improvement as well as a need for compassion, ethics, and morals, transitional work will be engaging and useful. Online training options beyond safety topics are extensive. Improving an employee's knowledge and skills while they are recovering from an injury is a good use of time for all involved and pays dividends in many cases. There are resources to help you develop a specific return to work interventions based on the injured worker's skill level and ambitions. Seek them out at the BWC, your Managed Care Organization (MCO), transitional work developers and consultants, and CompManagement.

Task Banking and Skills Matching

As a consultant, I get to see many best practices in my travels. I worked with a healthcare facility in Seattle whose workers' compensation coordinator (benefits coordinator) created a very effective system of task banking and skills matching. She would call each department about once a month and ask the department head what tasks and projects were falling behind. Soon, department heads just began sending requests. She would catalog the tasks and projects on a whiteboard in her office being sure to capture the minimum skills and education necessary. All injured workers would be evaluated to see if their education and skills matched anything on the board. Then the coordinator worked to obtain the transitional work release. Many of the tasks and projects were safety-focused such as engaging patients, co-workers, and family members on infection control. This is a great example of making the transitional work engaging and useful for all involved and how some planning, coordination, and creativity are required to successfully integrate transitional work with safety and continuous improvement.



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P&C Insurance Agent*

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

Worker safety during the COVID-19 pandemic

- OSHA has released several guides regarding worker safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, please [click here](#) to view.
- OSHA has also released a [new video](#) and poster, available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#), with step-by-step instructions on properly using respirators.
- OSHA's "[Ten Steps All Workplaces Can Take to Reduce Risk of Exposure to Coronavirus](#)" poster is now available in 13 languages.
- A new one-hour video on heat hazard recognition and prevention is available on OSHA's website. [Register](#) today for free.

Source: OSHA

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Worker safety during the COVID-19 pandemic

- The CDC [website](#) offers resources dedicated to assisting businesses with operation planning and preparing for and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Visit CDC's [COVID-19 Communications Resources](#) page to view guidance documents, videos, images and more.

Source: CDC

Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC)

Ergonomic Tips for Home Offices

- The BWC website offers an [Office Ergonomics for the Teleworker](#) guide provided from the Division of Safety and Hygiene and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Source: BWC

For more information,
connect with us!

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