



# The CHES Tournament

*Safety News and Views you can use.*

Complete Health, Environmental & Safety Services, Inc.

## Complete Health Environmental & Safety Services, Inc. Newsletter

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## Workers' Compensation Updates

### Managing injuries

Safety and workers' compensation are closely tied: stronger safety programs normally result in fewer injuries and lower premiums. Good management of injuries and a good return-to-work program can significantly reduce work comp costs for a company. We have seen as much as \$40,000 reduction in premiums when companies start enforcing safety and managing injuries.

If an employee is injured, using an occupational medicine clinic makes a difference. Health care providers that specialize in work-related injuries have knowledge of work comp laws. They also understand better the types of tasks and physical demands that are associated with different jobs. The result: workers usually get back to work sooner and your costs are less.

Making sure your employees know you care about their health also makes a difference. If an employee needs medical care, help them get it promptly. Make sure they have a ride home from the clinic or a way to get their vehicle home. If they're off work, check in with them often. Don't try to communicate only by email - if they can, ask them to stop in to drop off the needed medical reports or restrictions (WorkAbility forms in Minnesota). That connection matters.

### COMPACT

The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) recently published the latest edition of COMPACT, its work comp newsletter. One of the articles was on new reports by the Workers' Compensation Research Institute on health insurance and outcomes of injured workers, trends in work comp drug payments, and interstate variations on opioid prescriptions. Minnesota saw a decrease in opioids from 2011-2016, but they were still prescribed in 54% of work comp claims.

DLI plans to go live next August with Work Comp Campus, its new web-based system for filing and tracking workers' compensation claims, according to COMPACT. COMPACT also had articles on proposed rules for treating post-traumatic stress disorder claims and on how work comp and Medicare may impact one another. To read about all these in the latest edition of COMPACT, go to

<https://www.dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/0919c.pdf>

**Injury Stats: A Workplace Safety Dashboard**

Highlights from the Workplace Safety Dashboard, created by the Minnesota Safety Council, Minnesota Department of Labor & Industry and Minnesota Health Department:

- **More fatalities - now Minnesota isn't better than the national rate.**

In 2017, one Minnesota worker died from an occupational injury every 87 hours. 3.5 workers per every 100,000 died from work in 2017, equal to the 2017 national rate and an increase from the 2016 rate of 3.4.

- **Agriculture is the most dangerous type of work in Minnesota, even more so than construction.**

107 people working in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting died from work 2013-2017. Most were in crop production jobs. On average, 7 farm workers are seriously injured each day. 53 construction workers died from work during that same period.

- **Driving is dangerous.** About one in three workplace injuries involved driving.
- **More concussions** are being reported.

533 concussion injuries resulted in wage-loss payments from 2018. That's six times more than the number reporting in 2009.

- **Falls keep on killing and maiming.** On average, 11 workers a day are injured from falls at work.

The number of work comp claims has fallen, but the cost has not. While Minnesota workers' compensation claims have dropped since 2008, the inflation-adjusted cost for a claim has remained steady at about \$11,000.

The dashboard, Minnesota Workplace Safety 2019, is on the Minnesota Safety Council website at

<http://www.minnesotasafetycouncil.org/WorkplaceSafetyDashboard.pdf>

## Crane Standard

Do you have a crane over 2000 pounds? Do you do construction? Are your operators certified or licensed? Federal OSHA recently published its final rule on cranes and derricks in construction, requiring operators to be trained, certified or, if the state licenses crane operators, licensed, and evaluated before they can operate cranes used in construction. It applies to truck mounted cranes, but it doesn't apply to any cranes rated at less than 2000 pounds. Although it covers construction equipment that can "hoist, lower and horizontally move a suspended load," it specifically excludes backhoes, tow trucks, boom lifts or aerial lift trucks.

Minnesota is expected to adopt this standard soon.

## Industrial Stormwater Permits... Still Waiting

If you have an industrial stormwater general permit, it expires at the end of this year. You need to apply for a new permit, but the 2020-2025 permit application, which must be completed online - isn't available yet.

We encourage people to certify for the No Exposure Exclusion, if you can. That means you don't need a stormwater pollution prevention plan, you don't have to monitor runoff, there are no reports to submit, and you pay no fees. To be eligible, you need to ensure that "rain, snow and runoff do not contact significant materials or industrial activities 100% of the time." What that amounts to:

- Don't store anything outside other than wooden pallets or finished goods meant to live outside
- Keep dumpsters closed. Make sure they're in good condition, so rain can't enter them.
- When you move materials in and out, do it under shelter. If you unload raw steel during a rain shower, the oil on the steel can run off into the storm drain. That's a violation of No Exposure (and pollution of your nearest river or lake).

## Reporting Time: OSHA Recordkeeping and Environmental Deadlines

It's almost that time of year again. Note the following deadlines, through April 1, for OSHA recordkeeping, hazardous waste generators and air quality permit holders.

WHEN	WHAT	WHO'S AFFECTED
Dec. 15	Hazardous waste management reports due for Hennepin County	Hennepin County SQG and VSQG hazardous waste generators
Dec. 31	Wastewater sampling due	Those holding MCES wastewater permits
Jan. 31	Hazardous waste management annual report and license renewal for all metro counties, except Hennepin County	SQG and VSQG hazardous waste generators
Jan. 31	Industrial wastewater discharge report due	Those holding MCES wastewater permits
Jan. 31	OSHA 300A log summary - post from February 1 until April 30	Employers with 10 or more employees at any time during the year
Mar. 1	Tier II reports due	Companies that have more than threshold amounts of specific chemicals
Mar. 2	OSHA 300A must be submitted electronically to <a href="http://osha.gov">osha.gov</a>	In MN, any company with 20 or more employees
Mar. 31	Industrial Stormwater annual reports due	Companies within specific industry codes. Does not affect companies with No Exposure exclusion.
Apr. 1	Air permit (VOC) reports due (forms should be mailed in mid-Dec to early Jan)	Air Quality Permit B, C and Permit D holders, LEF permit holders*

For companies outside the Twin Cities metro area, hazardous waste reports are not due until Aug. 1, but it is a good idea to gather your information early in the year. You can submit as early as April.

\*If you have an air quality permit B, C or D, you may be eligible to void your permit. We can explain that to you; just give us a call.

If you voided your air permit, you must still maintain records of paint purchases, so continue to ask your jobber for an annual VOC report.

If you are a CHES maintenance client, we will be contacting you to set up a time to help complete your record-keeping. If you are not a maintenance client and would like assistance, please contact Carol at 651-842-9210 or [carkey@chess-safety.com](mailto:carkey@chess-safety.com).

## Winter's Coming - and So Is Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning

In November 2018, a drywall contractor was using a gas-powered generator, working inside an enclosed trailer. That person died. He or she was one of 14 carbon monoxide-caused deaths in Minnesota last year.

Your car exhaust is less likely to kill you than your generator or heater exhaust. Cars are usually operated outside. They have emission controls. Portable heaters, generators, and other small engines are often used inside, with no controls to reduce CO. Don't use internal combustion engines or fueled heaters inside if you can avoid it. If you can't avoid it, make sure you provide combustion air. Ventilate. And use a carbon monoxide alarm.