

KWORDS *from* KWORCC

Modified Duty Programs ~ Part 2

By Brandon Mann, KWORCC Loss Prevention Specialist

Modified duty programs, aka light duty or transitional duty, are a benefit. Whereas other initiatives focus on loss prevention and reducing the frequency of workplace injuries, modified duty programs focus on reducing the severity of a work-related injury by returning the employee back to his or her original job as quickly as possible. This is accomplished by modifying the employee's job duties so that the work tasks will fit within the doctor's work restrictions.

There are equally important, yet less tangible, benefits for an organization that adopts a modified duty program. For example, it allows the employer to ensure that work restrictions are being followed. Without a modified duty program, employees are not on the employer's premises, and the employer is unable to monitor the employee's activities. If a work restriction, for example, says not to lift more than 25 pounds, the employer is unable to make sure that the employee is following that restriction if they are at home. This can negatively affect the length of time for the employee to heal and return to his or her normal job. Additionally, modified duty programs send a message to the employees that having a workplace injury is not a paid vacation. The intangible benefit is that employees will have fewer workplace "accidents" if they understand that they will be required to work, even if in a limited capacity.

Employee benefits are also both tangible and intangible. The main tangible benefit that a modified duty program offers is financial. When an employee is injured and placed on leave, he or she is only paid a portion of the wage. In Kansas, that portion is two-thirds of the average weekly wage. Additionally, there is also a maximum amount that an employee may receive in weekly lost wage benefits, and in Kansas that amount is currently \$630.

A modified duty program can significantly influence an injured worker psychologically. There is a direct correlation between the human psyche and the healing of physical injuries, wherein an employee with fewer psychological stressors heals quicker than one with those stressors. When a worker is injured and is released to go back to work with restrictions, the reaction of the employer is

key to the employee's sense of self-worth. If the message from the employer is that the employee is only valued when they are at 100%, that message can cause anxiety and other emotional problems with the employee.

Like the effects of self-worth, a modified duty program assists the injured employee by keeping him or her engaged with the workplace and can eliminate the negative psychological effects of a prolonged absence. When an employee is away from the jobsite for an extended period due to an injury, there are hurdles that the employee must overcome mentally to get back to work. The employee may feel anxiety over how his or her return to work will be received by management and co-workers, and may be fearful they will not be able to perform the assigned tasks.

KWORCC claims staff is always available to help with modified duty issues. Please give us a call if you have questions or concerns.

Legal Detail: "Post Accident Drug Testing ~ Updated Forms"

by Dortha Bird

If you read the Workers Compensation Act, K.S.A. 2012 Supp. 44-501 sets out in its subsections several reasons why an injured worker would forfeit compensation benefits. One of those reasons is if the employee refuses to comply with an employer's postinjury drug test. KWORCC encourages its members to include postinjury drug testing requirements in their personnel policies. To assist with administering, we have consents and notices recently updated on our website – <http://kworcc.com/Forms.htm> find "Drug Testing Notice & Consent." Specifically, we have included a "POST-ACCIDENT DRUG TEST NOTICE," and to the consent and release forms added: "Pursuant to the Kansas Worker's Compensation Act, a split screen sample of my urine or blood sample sufficient for testing shall be retained and is available to me for independent testing if I so desire and I will be responsible for any costs associated with independent testing." Even if you don't have a policy, you can still have your employees sign a consent and notice. Please call me if you have questions about these forms.

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CLAIMS REPORTING

To submit a claim online, go to www.tristarrisk.com and select "report a claim". To call in a claim: 1-855-495-1554. Questions on claims should be directed to Amanda Chamberland: 1-844-702-2353x4713 Amanda.Chamberland@tristargroup.net

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Tick Season is HERE!

Experts are warning people that a potential "tick explosion" is underway, and the bloodthirsty critters will be crawling around in abundance this summer. Here are a few ways you can avoid these creepy creatures this summer:

1. **Wear Enough Clothing-** Look, we get it, you just spent the winter enduring layers upon layers of heavy coats and itchy sweaters, so the last thing you want is to walk around dripping sweat in more layers of clothing. But long-sleeved shirts and pants really are the best way to avoid picking up any micro-sized hitchhikers along the way.
2. **Sprays and Repellents-** Some days, it truly will be too hot to walk around the woods in long sleeves. This presents an opportunity to try out some insect repellents. Your best bet is sticking to the ones that contain DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus – ticks despise these the most, and likely won't want to stick around for a free ride.
3. **Check Yourself for Ticks... Then Check Again-** After any and all outings outdoors, perform a thorough inspection of your skin for tiny black spots. A quick shower is another good idea, as it allows you to inspect your more... hidden regions.
4. **Don't Assume You're Safe in Your Own Yard-** Ticks can be found anywhere, and that includes your very own backyard. So don't get caught with your guard down this summer just because you aren't making a trip to the woods. Ticks will happily call a city park or a fruit tree in your yard 'home.'

Ticks in Kansas

American Dog Ticks are common throughout Kansas from March through September in grasslands and along forest edges. These ticks can transmit Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever to dogs, cats and humans, and can transmit Cytauxzoonosis – an often fatal blood parasite to cats. Also, these ticks can also cause tick paralysis.

Lone Star Tick is named for the easily recognizable single white spot on the females dorsal shield. It has become common in the eastern half of Kansas as far west as Mitchell County. It occurs most commonly in woodland habitats with dense underbrush. They are often encountered from late February through early June. The Lone Star Tick, a major nuisance parasite, is also a vector of Lyme disease-like infection called Southern tick-associated rash illness and may transmit Ttularemia, also known as rabbit fever.

Brown Dog Tick is reddish brown in color, lacking the dorsal markings seen on the others. It is the only tick that infests human dwellings and kennels and can be found in heated buildings any time of the year. Infestations in kennels may be associated with outbreaks of canine ehrlichiosis and Babesia canis.

Black-Legged (Deer) Tick is increasing its presence across eastern Kansas. This species is small, with larvae the size of a pinhead and unengorged adults about 1/16 inch. In Kansas, juveniles occur from May through July. Adults occur mostly from September through December but may be found in the spring. This tick is the vector of Lyme disease in the central and eastern United States.

Focus on Claims:

KWORCC Pharmacy Program Reminder

By Joanie Melchert, TRISTAR Claims Manager

Effective April 1, 2018, KWORCC was brought under TRISTAR's Pharmacy Program with OPTUM. OPTUM introduction letters and pharmacy cards were mailed out at the end of March to those individuals with open, active workers compensation claims. OPTUM has a dedicated customer service team specific to TRISTAR and is available 24 hours a day / 7 days a week to assist Claims Examiners, Patients, and Pharmacy Representatives with prescription processing inquiries and requirements. OPTUM can be reached toll free at 1(866)845-7740. If you need a form find here: http://kworcc.com/Forms/TRISTAR-Optum%20First%20Fill_Editable.pdf

KWORCC Learning Center

Safety awareness and safety training are a large part of keeping your employees safe. Regular safety meetings (KWORCC recommends once a month) can be used to show videos from the KWORCC Safety Video Library as well as to discuss housekeeping and timely safety topics. Additionally, individual employees can take online courses through Gov-U (contact Ren Heitman at rheitman@localgovu.com or 866.845.8887 to set up an account if you don't have one) and the KWORCC Loss Prevention Staff is available for on site, in person group training.

Did you know?

- The test at the end of each course can be retaken as many times as needed to achieve a passing score of 80%.
- You can print a certificate of completion anytime; go to "Progress and Certificates" to see all of your training results and certificates.
- If you are interrupted while taking a course, the system will bookmark your place. You can start where you left off or go back to the beginning the next time you log in.
- Log in from KWORCC's site—click on the link to KWORCC Online University; you can also go to www.localgovu.com and enter your login codes.
- Don't like listening to the audio? Simply turn down or mute the volume on your computer if you do not wish to hear the audio.
- Both KWORCC and KCAMP offer courses through Local GovU and the course selections are different.

Local GovU

The most popular classes of 2017 were:

- Workplace Bullying
- Basic Firearm Safety
- Workplace Harassment
- Emergency Preparation and Egress
- Global SDS and the Hazard Communication Standard - Local Government
- Personal Protective Equipment 101
- Walking Your Way to Fitness
- Bloodborne Pathogens
- Lockout/Tagout 102
- Basic First Aid
- Lockout/Tagout 101

These, and many more are available for 2018.

Selected Video Learning

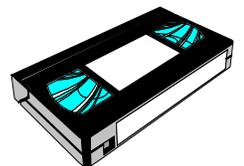
Most of the safety videos are available only on VHS. However, most videos with a number of G-106 and higher are available on DVD. The KWORCC staff is working to get popular topics on DVD. If you have a particular topic you would like to see us carry on DVD, please email Nicole at nicole@kworcc.com.

A complete list of available videos can be found

on the KWORCC website at <http://kworcc.com/LossPrevention.htm>.

Suggested video library selections:

- G-4 Respirator Safety
- G-8 Chainsaw Safety
- G-34 Heat Stroke
- G-75 Mower and right of way
- G-80 Road Crew Safety



On-Site Training Suggestion: Road Work Safety/Flagging

By Carl Eyman, Loss Prevention Manager

One of our most popular in-house classes is the Flagger Certification class. Flagger training is a mandatory class required by the MUTCD. Teaching someone to flag isn't a difficult job, it's teaching them their responsibility for the safety of the work crew and the general public.

For flaggers, it's making their flagger station as safe as they can make it. If they are doing that, they are making the job site as safe as they can make it for the crew. A flagger's head is always on a swivel checking traffic,



position of their own equipment. Remember, 70% of all work-related fatalities are caused by your own equipment.

The flagger is the public relations representative for the county and must be held to a high standard of professionalism. Everyone needs a reminder from time to time how dangerous working on a road crew can be and the standards that are required of them.

Understanding Weather Alerts

Spring weather is volatile and NOAA issues many watches, warnings and advisories. It is important to know what they mean and how they differ. WATCH essentially means a chance this condition will happen and usually covers a large geographical area for a lengthy time period. WARNING means the said weather is already occurring or is likely to occur and to take proper protective measures. Warnings are usually issued for much smaller geographical areas and usually for shorter more definite time periods. ADVISORIES are sort of in between a WATCH and WARNING. The expected weather condition has a pretty good chance of occurring, even a likely chance of occurring, but typically an advisory is used for less severe type of weather conditions.

Watches	
<i>Conditions are favorable or expected but not occurring or imminent</i>	
Tornado	Atmospheric <i>conditions are favorable</i> for the development of severe thunderstorms capable of producing tornadoes.
Severe Thunderstorm	Atmospheric <i>conditions are favorable</i> for the development of severe thunderstorms (i.e. – producing hail at least 1” in diameter and/or 50 knot (58 mph) or greater wind speeds).
Warnings	
<i>Conditions are occurring or imminent</i>	
Tornado	A severe thunderstorm <i>has developed</i> and has either produced a tornado <i>or radar has indicated</i> intense low level rotation in the presence of atmospheric conditions conducive to tornado development
Severe Thunderstorm	A severe thunderstorm <i>has developed</i> , capable of producing hail greater than 1” diameter and/or 50 knot (58 mph) wind speeds.

2018 Board Meeting Dates

- X January 18th
- X February 15th
- X March 22nd
- X April 26th
- X May 17th
- June 21st
- July 26th
- August 23rd
- September 20th
- October 15th – Annual Meeting
- November 15th
- December 13th