

February 2004

Health and Safety Courses

As we told you in the January issue of Municipal Safety News, we are in the middle of reviewing and updating our health and safety courses. We hope to have this completed by the end of February, and will then develop and distribute a schedule shortly after that time. Although our standard training is not available at this time, there are three different courses that are running and have been scheduled: *Defensive Driving Course*; *Overview of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Regulation and Code*; *Disability Management* (offered by the WCB).



Defensive Driving

Defensive driving is defined as "driving to prevent collisions, in spite of the actions of others and the conditions around you".

The Defensive Driving Course is a nationally recognized program developed by the Canada Safety Council for the benefit of drivers and employers of personnel who operate passenger size vehicles** as part of their daily work. Employers are encouraged to ensure that staff members who drive on municipal business complete a Defensive Driving Course regularly (e.g. every 3 years).

The course is aimed at experienced drivers and reminds them of their role while on the road and the impact their actions have on other drivers. It also provides them an opportunity to assess their attitudes while driving.

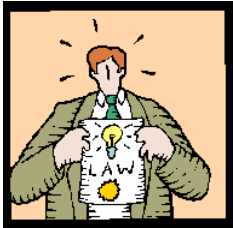
AMHSA offers this course for \$50.00 for municipal employees (associate member cost: \$75.00 per person). Please call Lorraine at 1-800-267-9764 if you would like to register for any of the following courses. We need a minimum of 10 people to run a course; if there is not sufficient registration, the course will be cancelled.

Date	Location
Wednesday, March 10	Camrose
Wednesday, March 24	High River
Tuesday, April 20	Lethbridge
Tuesday, April 27	Cold Lake
Tuesday, May 4	Grande Prairie
Thursday, May 20	Banff
Wednesday, May 26	Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
Tuesday, June 1	St. Albert
Thursday, June 3	Stony Plain

You can also arrange to have the Defensive Driving Course held on your site.

** If you have staff that drive larger vehicles and/or transport cargo, you may wish to consider having them take the Professional Driver Improvement Course. This course is similar to Defensive Driving, but

also focuses on topics such as pre-trip inspections, load security, driving conditions, intersections, passing and being passed, fatigue, etc. This course also is \$50 per person (municipal rate) or \$75 per person for associate members. Please call Lorraine if you would like to have this course held at your site.

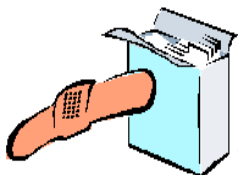


Overview of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Regulation and Code

As you probably know, the requirements for health and safety in the workplace have been revised. As of April 30, employers will need to comply with a new occupational health and safety Code. There have been a number of new provisions added - e.g. biohazards, violence, manual handling of loads, diving (including rescue diving by fire fighters), hazard assessments, etc. In addition there have been several changes to the existing requirements - for example, confined space entry, noise, exposure to chemicals.

AMHSA has developed a 1/2 day course to review the significant changes and new provisions for municipalities. We developed a schedule of courses around the province, and several municipalities have requested to have this course on their site. As a result there are approximately 45 courses being run over the next few months. Several of them are already full. If you are interested in attending one of the existing courses, or would like to have a course held at your site, give Lorraine a call at 1-800-267-9764.

The cost of the course is \$85 per person, which includes a copy of the new OH&S Act, Regulation and Code produced by Queen's Printer. Without the legislation the cost is \$30 per person. **Please note:** Queen's Printer is heavily back ordered on the legislation, and participants' copies will not be available until April. We have classroom copies of the legislation available for the course, and will take names if participants want to get a copy from us.



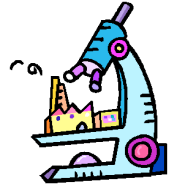
Disability Management (offered by Workers' Compensation Board)

This one-day seminar helps employers understand the relationship between claims costs and WCB premiums, and how these can be controlled through an effective disability management program. The seminar discusses the six key elements of a disability management program. This seminar is free of charge, but pre-registration is required.

If you would like to register for one of the following courses contact **Pat Degenstein with the WCB at 1-866-498-4694.**

Edmonton	February 19	March 11, March 25	April 8, April 22
Calgary	February 5, February 18	March 9, March 23	April 6, April 20
Grande Prairie	----	----	April 29

News from the Partnerships Program



Congratulations to all of you for your dedication to health and safety and your work in developing, maintaining and enhancing your health and safety management systems. Most of you were able to have an audit done of your system: it would have been an external audit, conducted by staff from another municipality, in order to obtain or renew your Certificate of Recognition; or it would have been an internal audit conducted by your own certified staff, in order to maintain your Certificate.

For those of you who were successful in obtaining or maintaining your Certificate of Recognition, congratulations. You know the work that is involved in reaching this level, but the reward is in a healthy and safe workplace for your staff, and a knowledgeable, competent workforce. An added reward will be the financial incentive from the Workers' Compensation Board.

For those of you who were not as successful, we know that you have been working hard towards implementing a strong program and it takes time. Use the information gained in your last audit to improve your program and plan to have an external audit done in the next few months. Even though you might not have a Certificate of Recognition, recognize the progress you have made and the positive culture created in your workplace.

Letters will be sent to all participating municipal managers by the end of March. These letters will explain your municipality's results from 2003, and requirements for 2004. Please note that in the statements you receive from the WCB, it may indicate that you do not have a Certificate of Recognition, even though you met the program requirements for 2003. Don't Worry! This is an administration issue - there are delays from the time audits are completed until the information gets from AMHSA to Alberta Human Resources and Employment, and the Workers' Compensation Board and is processed. Everything will be in order by late March. Cheques will be sent to eligible municipalities in late May.

A big thank you to all of the auditors for helping out again this year, and thank you to the management teams for letting them help. If it wasn't for the peer system, external audits would have to be done by private occupational health and safety consultants, and would become cost prohibitive for many municipalities. We review all audits that are done for the municipal Partnerships program and the quality is generally excellent. We provide feedback to each auditor on what they did well and where there is room for improvement. All participating auditors should receive that feedback by the end of February, if they haven't received anything yet.

It's Winter

Hopefully by the time you are reading this, the cold that gripped Alberta will be long gone. But everyone still needs to ensure they are ready to work in and travel in the cold. The nature of municipal work often requires workers to be out in vehicles on the roads, and to be outside doing work.

Any time a worker is out in a vehicle, there should be an assumption that the vehicle will break down (likely in some remote area). Therefore, a means of communication should be available. In addition a winter emergency kit should be in the vehicle. The kinds of things in the kit include:

- blankets and extra clothing
- booster cables

- emergency food (stuff that you wouldn't normally want to eat as a snack)
- first aid kit
- flashlight with working batteries (there are now flashlights available that do not require batteries)
- matches and candle in a deep can
- flares or reflective triangle
- small shovel and kitty litter or sand

The cold introduces some extra hazards to any work: cold workers are more prone to injury because the cold impacts their ability to perform complex mental tasks, and reduces their physical dexterity; the cold of course can also cause hypothermia and frostbite.

In addition to the air temperature, the wind and humidity must also be considered when looking at the environmental conditions. An individual's ability to keep warm will also be impacted by personal factors such as their age, weight, fitness, circulatory health, a previous cold injury, and acclimatization; and by other factors such as how they are dressed, the nature of the work (how physically demanding), fatigue and hunger, medications, and use of alcohol or nicotine.

To protect themselves, workers should dress in layers. If done correctly, it will regulate the amount of heat and perspiration generated and lost while on the job. If the work pace is too fast and/or the clothing is not appropriate, excessive sweating will occur and the clothing will become wet. This will greatly reduce the insulating capabilities of the clothing. It is important to keep all skin covered - this includes using hats, gloves or mitts (mitts are warmer than gloves), as well as scarves or balaclavas and decent footwear. Protecting the eyes may also be necessary.

Despite all the protective clothing, it is important to keep moving while outside, and to take regular breaks in warmer environments. Once inside, outer layers should be removed so that workers do not overheat. Guidelines have been established by the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) on the maximum amount of time that workers should remain out doors and the number of breaks that should be taken. These guidelines are based on temperature and wind speed.

Alberta Human Resources and Employment, Workplace Health and Safety has developed a comprehensive publication: ***Working in the Cold***. This publication provides more information on prevention and control of heat loss as well as signs and symptoms of cold disorders. It also includes the ACGIH guidelines for working in the cold. It can be found on their website at www.whs.gov.ab.ca Once there, search their publications listing. If you have trouble finding it, give us a call at 1-800-267-974 and we'll send you a copy.