



Risk Management Solutions



Summer 2020

A Quarterly Newsletter of the AMIC/MWCF Loss Control Division

PPE and Healthy Habits: Staying Ahead of a Pandemic

Stephanie Southerland • Loss Control Representative • AMIC/MWCF

As of June 1, there were 18,308 confirmed cases of Coronavirus in the State of Alabama, resulting in 646 deaths. Those numbers will have increased by the time you are reading this publication. Given current circumstances, it is more important than ever to practice healthy sanitary habits in both the work environment and at home. This is the first pandemic most have experienced in our lifetime. Businesses are struggling; citizens are struggling; tax bases are dwindling. We keep hearing about the “new normal” and I believe we are all ready to get back to life as we have always known it. Practicing healthy habits will hopefully allow us to start the climb back to normal.

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal Protective Equipment, commonly referred to as “PPE”, is equipment worn to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious workplace injuries and illnesses. You’ve likely heard a lot about PPE in the past few months – particularly in terms of shortages for medical professionals. PPE is one crucial way to both reduce the spread of COVID-19 and keep workers safe. While the equipment is necessary for both public and personal health, there’s one glaring issue in the US right now concerning PPE: a major shortage – and it is putting anyone who comes into contact with COVID-19 patients at risk. The current PPE shortage is driven not only by the number of COVID-19 cases but also by misinformation, panic buying and stockpiling – something that, if it continues, will only lead to further shortages of PPE.

PPE works as a barrier between an individual’s skin, mouth, nose or eyes against viral and bacterial infections. When used properly and with other infection control practices such as hand-washing, using alcohol-based hand sanitizers and covering coughs and sneezes, PPE minimizes the spread of infection from one person to another. Some examples of PPE you may want to consider for your employees are: gloves, medical masks, respirators (N95 or FFP2 standard, or equivalent) and eye protection.

The issue with most PPE items stems from the first word of the acronym: personal. With few exceptions, “in general, most PPE is designed to be used only one time and by one person prior to disposal,” explains the FDA. Therefore, washing and reusing or sharing equipment with other users is not intended.

All PPE should be safely designed and constructed and should be maintained in a clean and reliable fashion. It should fit comfortably, encouraging worker use. If the personal protective equipment does not fit properly, it can make the difference between being safely covered or dangerously exposed. When engineering, work practice, and administrative controls are not feasible or do not provide sufficient protection, employers must provide PPE to their workers and ensure its proper use. Employers are also required to train each worker required to use personal protective equipment to know:

- When it is necessary
- What kind is necessary
- How to properly put it on, adjust, wear and take it off
- The limitations of the equipment
- Proper care, maintenance, useful life, and disposal of the equipment

If PPE is to be used, a PPE program should be implemented. This program should address the hazards present; the selection,



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Protective Measures for Law Enforcement During a Pandemic

Terry Sanders • Police Safety Consultant • AMIC/MWCF

No time for your health today, no health for your time tomorrow. ~ Thibaut

As we have experienced the COVID-19 world-wide pandemic for several months, we should consider “lessons learned”. Agencies would be wise to review their entire response to the pandemic recording all strengths and weaknesses – what worked and what did not. Many agencies were caught off guard with inadequate Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE). During a pandemic, we now know that PPE may be difficult to obtain. Agencies must always maintain an inventory of all necessary PPE for their personnel. Even though (PPE) is not new in law enforcement, the Coronavirus pandemic added an emphasis on the importance of being properly equipped.

PPE Training

Donning a mask and gloves without proper training on the use of PPE may give your personnel a false sense of security and place them in more danger. All personnel should receive PPE Donning/Doffing instruction. Excellent trainers are available in your area to include Fire Medics, EMS and other medical personnel. Do not wait until the next pandemic to prepare. *Train now!* In fact, proper use of PPE should be added to your new hire orientation checklist and Field Training Officer (FTO) training outline. LocalGovU and the AMIC/MWCF Loss Control library are excellent resources for this training. Both can be accessed at www.losscontrol.org. PPE that you maintain in inventory should include nitrile gloves, eye protection (prescription glasses at a minimum, safety glasses with some side protection or goggles), N95 and surgical mask.

Written Procedures

Moving forward, every agency should have a written Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). This written procedure should include but not be limited to the following: Current information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on how to protect yourself; alternative call response to limit physical contacts; limiting access to the police station; checklist of necessary PPE; instructions on the proper use of PPE; protocols to follow if exposed; and protocols if you become infected with the virus.

A Coronavirus COVID-19 Police Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), along with a Training PowerPoint, Written Test and Training Certificate can be downloaded at www.losscontrol.org. The SOP was developed from protective measures being employed by both police and fire departments across the state during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, information was obtained from the CDC. The purpose of the policy and training material is the protection of law enforcement personnel.

APOST CEU

Certified police officers can obtain one hour of APOST CEUs from the PowerPoint training session. A copy of the Certificate of Training signed by the instructor should be kept in departmental training files. The PowerPoint Training Certificate along with all resource materials on the Coronavirus Personnel Protection SOP can be downloaded at www.losscontrol.org under **Reference Documents** by searching Key Word “Covid”. If you choose to use the written test, it will reinforce the key points of the SOP.

Recommendations

As our state continues to allow more businesses to open and people return to the workplace police agencies should not let their guards down. The virus is still active and contagious. In a May 30, 2020, article in *The National Law Review* the following recommendations were listed for employers to continue to practice. Police agencies would be wise to consider these safety measures.

- Use of healthy hygiene practices.
- Intensified cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation.
- Social distancing.
- Telework and cancellation of non-essential travel.
- Seating distance of at least 6 feet.
- Restricted use of any shared items or spaces.
- Training all staff in safety procedures.
- Having sick employees stay home.
- Establishing routine, daily employee health checks.
- Monitoring absenteeism and having flexible time off policies.
- Having an action plan if an employee tests positive/presumptive positive for COVID-19.

Law enforcement is inherently dangerous and COVID-19 has no doubt added to the hazards. Realizing the present danger, agencies and individual officers *must* remain vigilant concerning personal safety. ■

For additional information:

www.natlawreview.com/article/question-answer-employer-guide-return-to-work-time-covid-19



Healthy Habits ————— continued from cover

maintenance and use of PPE; the training of employees; and monitoring of the program to ensure its ongoing effectiveness.

Best Practices

Three months ago, few of us thought about reserving a booth at a favorite restaurant or being shoulder to shoulder with a stranger at an event. Now we have a stronger tendency to prioritize good health and hygiene. As we all adapt to life in pandemic times, it is helpful to be reminded of what we can do to protect ourselves and the people (and pets) around us.

Sometimes your employees and guests must interact. When they do, take precautions to help minimize their risk of exposure to harmful germs when they are in shared spaces or using shared equipment. Access barriers and crowd control supplies keep order at events, municipal services or in areas with heavy foot traffic. Portable belt barriers, plastic chain barriers and rope barriers guide pedestrians or temporarily block access to aisles, doorways and walkways. Wall-mounted retractable barriers restrict access without taking up floor space. Bollards and decorative security planters are visual deterrents to both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Barricades and portable safety barriers direct traffic and block access to hazards or equipment. Gates block access to property, and turnstiles manage and count pedestrian access to buildings or events. Make a concerted effort to maintain social distancing in these interactions.

Disinfectants and sanitizers significantly reduce the amount of germs on hard nonporous surfaces to stop germs from spreading, but they may not completely destroy or eliminate these organisms. They also kill most pathogens and disease-causing microscopic organisms on surfaces to lower the risk of transmitting infection. Some products include germicidal bleach, germicidal disinfectant cleaners and a wide variety of disinfectant cleaners. Apply these products after cleaning the surface to reduce the risk of spreading germs.

Wet cleaning wipes are disposable cloths that are used to clean, disinfect and sanitize nonporous surfaces, helping keep workers healthy and facilities clean. Disinfecting and sanitizing wipes contain a disinfectant to significantly reduce the amount of germs on surfaces and lower the risk of transmitting infection. Cleaning wipes include a cleaning agent that breaks down grease, oils, dirt, and other contaminants. These are a convenient option to keep in shared work areas such as near copy machines, workshops and commonly used doorways/doorknobs.

Something to consider not only during this pandemic but for future “flu seasons” are hands free soap dispensers and paper towel dispensers. Soap dispensers supply a pre-measured amount of hand soap to help prevent waste. Most have infrared sensors that detect the presence of hands so users don’t have to touch the handle or dispenser opening. Paper towel dispensers keep disposable towels and wipes ready for use in high-traffic locations including public restrooms, commercial kitchens and breakrooms. Manual towel dispensers save energy, have fewer moving parts and are easy to maintain. Automatic paper towel dispensers are hands-free or touchless eliminating the possibility of germs. Controlled dispensing avoids overuse and minimizes waste.

Disposable gloves create a barrier between your hands and objects you are handling to keep hands clean and protected and keep oils and dirt on your hands from transferring to the objects. Single-use gloves are to be thrown away after each task to prevent cross contamination. Thinner gloves offer higher dexterity and better touch sensitivity, while thicker gloves offer more protection for hands. Single-use disposable gloves are worn in laboratories, food service, clean rooms and sterile environments and when cleaning or performing janitorial tasks.

As you have heard many times, don’t fear the coronavirus, but please respect it. Until our country has a solution to COVID-19, please be safe by practicing sanitary habits; minimizing contact with others; and, if you are not feeling well or believe you may have been exposed, please follow the self-quarantine protocol. Be safe and be well! ■

APOSTC Certified Law Enforcement Continuing Education During the COVID-19 State of Emergency

Effective March 19, 2020 an Emergency Rule was put into effect for a minimum of 120 days unless extended by supplemental emergency proclamation by the Governor.

This rule states that the maximum of six (6) hours currently allowed for video, computer, multimedia, or satellite-based training is increased to twelve (12) hours. Agency heads will be allowed to waive the requirement that a training coordinator be present during the training. The agency head may approve training which does not include a post-viewing examination, as long as the training is of the type that includes participation/accountability protocols and provides for documentation (i.e., email, electronic certificate, etc.) upon completion of training. Training documentation must be retained by the agency.

This is an excellent opportunity to utilize LocalGovU to obtain APOST CEU’s. Log in at www.losscontrol.org and click the link “online training”. Training certificates for documentation are printable at the completion of each course and the training is free to all AMIC or MWCF members.

Defining Moment

Lawn Mowing Safety

Lawn mowing is an important part of city and park maintenance. However, a lawn mower can be extremely dangerous if it is not handled properly. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that each year lawn mowers injure more than 110,000 people seriously enough to require treatment in hospital emergency rooms. The following practices can help to prevent most accidents:

- Read the operator’s manual and follow all defined safety procedures.
- Train the operator.
- Check guards and shields before starting the mower.
- Dress properly to do the job safely. Always wear sturdy shoes; steel-toes safety shoes are preferred
- Handle gasoline with care. Allow engine to cool before filling. Fuel up outdoors then wipe up all spills.
- Keep all persons and pets away from mowing area.
- Never allow additional riders on riding mowers. Extra riders may be thrown from mowers and run over.
- Prohibit all horseplay around or on lawn mowers.
- Never use zero-turn mowers on steep slopes. Mower overturns can cause serious injury. Drive up and down slopes when operating riding mowers. Mow across the slope when using walk-behind mowers.
- Use ear plugs or ear muffs to protect your hearing.
- Take care of your mower. Proper maintenance is essential to mower safety.

2020 SKIDCAR Schedule

Through an advanced, computer-controlled driver training vehicle known as the SKIDCAR System, trainees learn how to react quickly and safely to a range of hazardous driving conditions. Training is conducted throughout the state at a minimal cost. Visit www.losscontrol.org for more information.

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| July 14 – 24 | Fort Payne |
| August 10 – 21 | Decatur |
| Sept. 28 – Oct. 2 | Phenix City |
| October 19 – 23 | Eufaula |



Register and pay online at www.losscontrol.org!



Loss Control Division

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- 5.049 Distractions: Behind the Wheel For Drivers
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- 5.055 Distracted Driving: At What Cost?
- 7.026 The Facts About Ticks and Lyme Disease
- 7.105 Groundskeeping Safety: Dealing With Bugs and Critters
- 7.106 Groundskeeping Safety: Be a Pro!
- 7.108 Protecting Your Feet: Learning Your ABC's
- 7.111 Back Injury Prevention for Public Entities (TML)
- 7.115 First Aid: Prepared to Help
- 7.116 CPR and AED: The Chain of Survival
- 7.117 Hazards of Cell Phone Usage
- 7.118 Safety Procedures for Lawn Mower Operators
- 7.119 Landscape Power Tool Safety
- 7.120 Hedge Trimmer Safety
- 7.121 Video Guide to Chainsaw Safety
- 7.122 String Trimmer Safety
- 7.123 Boating Safety

Video/DVD requests to: **Sonya McCarley** at: **334-262-2566**
sonyam@alalm.org or FAX at **334-262-2809**

Need Help Filing Work Comp Claims?

For step-by-step instructions, visit:

www.almwcf.org

Employment Practices Law Hotline

1-800-864-5324

Through a toll-free Employment Practices Law Hotline, members can be in direct contact with an attorney specializing in employment-related issues. When faced with a potential employment situation, the hotline provides a no-cost, 30-minute consultation.

www.losscontrol.org