
Spring safety

Here we are in 2023 and the first day of spring has come and gone. This is a great time for us all to leave the cold weather behind and look forward to warmer weather. The hazards we face in the winter may be different than the hazards we face in the spring. If your employees are working outside this spring, they should be made aware of those dangers. Below is a list of work your employees may be performing outdoors, the hazards they may face, and tips on staying safe.

Outdoor power equipment

1. Be sure to wear gloves, safety goggles/glasses, sturdy shoes, pants, and any other necessary PPE.
2. Follow all the manufacturer's operation and safety guidelines and do not take short cuts. The guidelines are designed for your safety.
3. Perform a maintenance tune up on your equipment such as oil/fuel change, sparkplug, filter, etc.
4. Ensure your blades on equipment are kept sharp as this will make the job easier and lower the chances of getting injured.
5. Remember to protect your hearing. Outdoor power equipment can damage your hearing.

Working at heights

1. When using a ladder, inspect it for damage and be sure to use the right ladder for the job.
2. Extension ladders should extend at least 3 feet above the working platform or roof.
3. Always maintain a three-point contact and if you need to carry tools, use a tool belt.
4. Scaffolding must be built per the manufacture's specifications and by a competent person.
5. Use the appropriate fall protection when working at heights.
6. When removing material from the back of a truck, ensure the truck bed is organized to eliminate any trip hazards.

Outdoor hazards

1. Reduce the risk of sunburn and skin cancer by wearing long sleeves, a wide-brimmed hat and sunshades. Use sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher.
2. Be sure to wear insect repellent to prevent insect bites.
3. When using chemicals, be sure to follow the manufacture's recommendations. Heed all safety warnings!!!
4. Keep an eye on the thermometer and take precautions if it gets too hot. Don't forget to drink water or hydrating liquids.
5. Learn the warning signs of heat-related illnesses and share them with others. These include symptoms like headache, dizziness, rapid pulse, nausea and confusion.

Working outside as the weather warms up can be beneficial, mentally and physically. The warm sun, cool breeze and new blossoms are just a few benefits. But we must remember there are some hidden hazards. Be sure to take the appropriate precautions, as this will make working outdoors safer and more enjoyable!

For more information, please contact Sedgwick's Andy Sawan at 330.819.4728 or andrew.sawan@sedgwick.com

Controlling costs with the handicap reimbursement program

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) offers the Handicap Reimbursement Program to potentially offset claim costs and encourage employers to hire and retain employees with a handicapped condition. Ohio Revised Code 4123.343 recognizes 26 conditions / disabilities in which, under some circumstances, the employer may be eligible for reimbursement of partial claim costs. The handicap percentage awarded by BWC will reduce claim costs without reducing the benefits to the injured worker. The reduced claim costs can result in sizable premium reductions.

Eligibility Requirements

If an employee suffers a lost-time industrial injury/ occupational injury or death, the claim may be eligible for handicap reimbursement if it can be shown that the handicapped condition pre-existed the industrial injury or occupational disease and either caused the claim or contributed to increased costs or delay in recovery. Additionally, one of the following benefit types must have been paid in the claim:

- Temporary total compensation
- Permanent total disability
- Permanent partial-scheduled loss
- Survivor benefits
- Wages in lieu of temporary total disability

Application Filing Deadlines

Private Employers:

- If the date of injury is between Jan. 1 and June 30, the application must be filed by June 30 of the year no more than six years from the year of the date of injury or occupational disease.
- If the date of injury is between July 1 and Dec. 31, the application must be filed by June 30 of the year no more than seven years from the year of the date of the injury or occupational disease.

Public Employers:

- A public employer must file the application by Dec. 31 of the year no more than six years from the year of the date of the injury or occupational disease.

The Sedgwick cost containment team conducts reviews on claims which meet the eligibility requirements for handicap reimbursement, files the application and attends the handicap hearing on behalf of our Ohio TPA clients.

If you have any questions, contact our Sedgwick program manager, David Deyo , at 6143185516 or david.deyo@sedgwick.com.