Lessons Learned

Title: Keep in Touch With Offsite Staff

Loss Amount: $12,000

Situation:

A veterinary hospital kennel worker was walking a dog when it collapsed. The pair was just down the street from the hospital and the employee had no way of contacting her employer to request help so she picked up the dog and carried it back. It weighed about 25 pounds and by the time they returned she had a sore back. The dog was treated for exhaustion and recovered.

Though the employee did not request medical care at the time of the incident the next morning she could hardly get out of bed. She was directed to a local clinic where she was diagnosed with a lumbar strain. Her recovery involved a week off work and several weeks of physical therapy.

Lessons Learned:

Lifting heavy weights can put a serious strain on low back muscles and joints. Carrying heavy items over even a short distance can cause even more stress on the body because muscles and joints have to react to a constantly shifting center of gravity. Add to this an animal's awkward shape and weight distribution, as well as their tendency to move about, and there is a high potential for an employee injury.

The best way to limit circumstances such as described above is to require employees working off the property to be joined by a co-worker (i.e., work as a team) and/or to equip them with a cell phone. There are any number of accidents or problems that could occur while staff is working off the property. If this worker had a partner or a cell phone to call for assistance it is unlikely she would have sustained an injury.

For Further Assistance in the Prevention of all Types of Losses:

- Call VISC at 888.762.3143
- Call the Fireman's Fund Loss Control Help Desk toll-free at 888.527.6872

“Lessons Learned” is a monthly feature provided by the CVMA Insurance Program and is designed to promote practice safety, which contributes to employee well-being, morale, increased productivity, controlling insurance costs, and potentially enhancing your bottom line.

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