

Lessons Learned

Title: Standing on the Job Has Its Limits

Loss Amount: \$142,000

Situation:

Veterinary care employees often work on their feet for long hours. While they may get more exercise than they would working at a desk from nine to five, prolonged standing can also cause problems.

In this case, a 28-year old veterinary technician was working four 10-hour shifts, much of it standing on bare concrete floors. Over time she developed tendonitis in both ankles, as well as painful heel spurs. She received steroidal treatment and cut back on her hours but the discomfort continued to increase. Multiple surgeries to both ankles ensued, followed by extensive physical therapy and rehabilitation. Although she was a highly motivated individual and loved her job she was unable to drive or stand for more than an hour during much of this time. This limited her options to return to work and ultimately, three years after her treatment began, she left the industry altogether to pursue the accounting profession.

Lessons Learned:

There are several things that can be done to minimize the hazards of standing on the job

- Educate staff to the importance of letting their bodies rest. If the job requires prolonged standing then have a seat whenever possible, such as to do paperwork or during breaks.
- Employ anti-fatigue mats for standing workstations. These can be very effective and are portable for changing work areas.
- Require that staff wear proper shoes which have cushioned soles and proper arch support.

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.
CA Lic. # 0F64180