Lessons Learned

Title:  Use Caution When Walking Dogs

Loss Amount:  $84,000

Situation:

A veterinary worker was walking a large dog from the rear of the practice to the front when it lunged forward. The dog was on a leash but its abrupt movement caused the employee to be yanked off her feet. She sustained serious injuries to her arm, shoulder, neck and back as a result of the sharp pull and then the fall.

Lessons Learned:

Employee injuries while handling animals on leashes are relatively common in the veterinary industry and, as we can see in this case, potentially very serious. Precautions that can be taken to prevent such incidents include:

- Keep the leash short and take up any slack. Anticipate an animal's desire to pull on the leash and use firm pressure to counter it.
- Use a leash that is suited to the size of the animal. Larger animals should be restrained by leashes that are more substantial. Such leashes are easier to hold onto and less likely to cause discomfort to the animal or the employee when tension is applied.
- Consider the use of shock-absorbing leashes, especially for dealing with large dogs.
- Do not try to handle more than one dog at a time.
- Wear appropriate footwear with slip-resistant soles.
- When outside, walk dogs in a quiet, fenced-in area away from other animals they may be strongly attracted to.

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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