State of Nevada

Department of Administration

RISK-Y BUSINESS

Risk Management Division

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DECOMMISSIONING STATE-OWNED BUILDINGS

When a State-owned building has been or is proposed to be vacated for any reason and is not planned to be occupied for a period of time, the building should be decommissioned. The goal of decommissioning is to reduce or eliminate hazards and liabilities present in the building and its systems while temporarily protecting it until a decision has been made on the future use of the building. This procedure will reduce or eliminate day-to-day operational costs and help mitigate future costs associated with commissioning or startup of the building.

Following specific procedures and guidelines will protect the building from sudden loss and weatherize and maintain the structure to prevent moisture penetration. Providing temporary protection and stabilization for vacant buildings will prolong the life of the building and it's systems, slow down its deterioration, secure it from damage and vandalism and mitigate future start up costs while the future of the building is being decided. A proper approach to building decommissioning will provide the basis for an effective remediation plan and future building use. For more information please contact the State Public Works Board at (775) 684-4141.

WINTER SAFETY TIPS

Keep your workers safely on their feet. Preventing slips and falls is a major concern for everyone when outdoor surfaces are wet, icy, or slippery underfoot. Here are some suggestions to help your employees prevent falls and possible injuries:

Wear appropriate footwear with non-slip soles.

Take extra care when walking on wet, icy, or snow-covered walkways.

Walk slowly and slide your feet on slippery surfaces.

Avoid turning sharply when you walk on a slippery surface.

Hold onto the railing when using outdoor stairways.

Be especially careful when carrying packages, equipment, materials, etc.

Wipe your feet when entering a building so that your wet soles won't cause you to slip.

THE COLD INCREASES RISK FOR FROZEN PIPES

Frigid temperatures can cause one of winter's worst woes—frozen water pipes. But property owners can take some simple precautions to prevent the inconvenience and expense of frozen water pipes. These include:

Disconnecting hoses
Draining irrigation systems.
Caulking around incoming pipes.
Closing or blocking foundation vents.
Insulating outside pipes and faucets.
Insulating inside pipes and faucets in cold areas.
If you leave your home or business for an extended period you should raise the thermostat.
Locate your master water shut-off valve and test it.
Opening cupboard doors under sinks on outside walls so pipes are exposed to inside heat.

Risk Management is pleased to announce its latest partner, Cannon Cochran Management Services Inc (CCMSI) to the team. CCMSI is the new third party administrator to provide claims management services on behalf of the State's injured workers.

CCMSI has been providing worker's compensation claims administration services since 1978. In Nevada, CCMSI represents a large majority of public entities including Nevada System of Higher Education, City of Reno, City of Sparks, Washoe County School District, Washoe County, City of Henderson and City of North Las Vegas. CCMSI has a 98% client satisfaction rate that is unparalleled in the industry. In addition, CCMSI's adjuster turnover rate is less than 3%. It is not unusual for CCMSI to have clients that have utilized their services for 10-20 years and routinely contract for 4-5 year terms.

What this means to you is a company that provides the highest level of customer service, which is a priority of the Risk Management division. There should be minimal, if any disruption in service to you, your agency and most importantly the injured worker.

Please feel free to contact me directly with any concerns or questions. Risk Management always welcomes the opportunity to serve you. I am confident CCMSI will be a valued, long-term partner with the State. Thank you.
~ Karen Caterino Risk Manager

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January is National Radon Action Month

It has no smell or taste and you can't see it, but this gas can accumulate to harmful levels when trapped indoors. If you haven't tested your home for it, you could be exposing your family to a known carcinogen that can cause lung cancer over time.

Radon, a naturally occurring radioactive gas, is present in elevated concentrations in many homes and buildings, and is the leading cause of lung cancer among nonsmokers. Radon-induced lung cancer kills more people than secondhand smoke, drunken driving, falls in the home, drowning or home fires. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates 21,000 Americans die each year from lung cancer caused by indoor radon exposure.

In efforts to educate people about indoor radon exposure, the EPA has proclaimed January as National Radon Action Month and state radon programs are making efforts to make this health risk known and to encourage people to take action by having their homes tested.

With over 5,394 usable radon test results since September 2003, elevated radon levels have been found in one out of every four homes tested in Nevada. The highest radon potential is in Carson City, Douglas, Elko, Humboldt, Lander, Lincoln, Lyon, Mineral, Pershing, Washoe and White Pine counties. Sample sizes have been too small for Esmeralda, Eureka, and Storey counties to draw any conclusion about radon potential, but elevated radon levels have also been found in these counties.

The major source of radon concentrations in a home comes from the soil beneath a home, entering through foundation cracks, plumbing and utility openings and some of the porous materials used to construct foundations and floors. Radon can enter any home – old or new, well-sealed or drafty. Even homes with basements, slab on grade, crawl spaces or no visible foundation cracks are susceptible.

You can't predict which homes will have high radon levels, as two neighboring homes can have very different radon levels. Variables that determine radon levels include how the home was constructed, lifestyle factors and the strength of the radon source beneath the house. The only way to know a building's radon levels is to test. A simple three-day test can determine whether a home has elevated levels of radon. If high levels of radon are found, there is a fix for reducing radon levels.

The University of Nevada Cooperative Extension's Radon Education Program (UNCE) and the Nevada State Health Division urge all Nevadans to get their homes tested for radon. In recognition of Radon Action Month, UNCE is offering free radon test kits at program presentations being offered statewide throughout the month.

UNCE offers radon test kits at most Cooperative Extension offices across the state. Free test kits currently are offered in Washoe, Douglas, Carson City, Southern Nye, Lincoln and Clark counties. Other counties offer test kits for $5. For more information, visit the Nevada Radon Education Program Web site, www.unce.unr.edu/radon, or call the Radon Hot Line, 888-RADON10 (888-723-6610). For additional information on radon, contact the Nevada State Health Division, (775) 687-7531or (775) 687-7536.

SPACE HEATERS PROHIBITTED FROM STATE OWNED OR LEASED OFFICE SPACE

According to the Governor Guinn's April 2001 "Nevada Energy Conservation Plan for State Government" workforce supervisors are responsible for the enforcement of the ban on privately owned electrical equipment in state used office space. Each Department has submitted an "Energy Conservation Plan" as part of their Policies and Procedures which outline each Department's commitment not to allow portable heaters and fans or other privately owned electrical equipment such as individual coffee makers, refrigerators, microwaves, crock pots and so forth outside of designated break room areas.

There are several reasons the use of space heaters are prohibited:

Energy Consumption ~ On average, a portable space heater cost $10.00 per week to operate. While this may sound like a small amount, if just 1% of all state employees used a space heater and only during the months of December, January and February, the additional energy costs to the State or the landlord would be $30,000.00. *That's right, thirty thousand dollars!!*

HVAC Balance/Imbalance ~ The use of space heaters almost always causes the main HVAC to pump cold air into the areas that have both a temperature sensor and a space heater. The space heater (or other misplaced equipment, e.g. copy machine, computer tower, coffee pot, refrigerator, microwave, etc.) warms the area near a thermostat, which signals the temperature is getting too warm so it calls for the air supply to blow cool air into the office area.

Electrical outages ~ Circuit interruptions – Most offices are provided power for lighting, computers, and other low-voltage items used in the course of work. Portable heaters (and other prohibited personal equipment) increase the load on these circuits resulting in circuit breaker overload, which causes the breaker to trip.

Fire safety ~ Items left too close to the heater or overloading of the electrical breakers can and do cause fires. This is a primary reason portable space heaters are prohibited

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) statistics from data collected during the first year (1999) the NFPA tracked usage of space heaters; space heaters caused:

- 2,800 structural fires;
- $69.5 million in property damage;
- 48 civilian deaths; and
- 195 civilian injuries.

References: SAM 1028.0; SB358; NRS-702.215; NRS 331.095; State of Nevada leases; Governor Guinn's April 2001 "Nevada Energy Conservation Plan for State Government"

SAFETY HINT:

Put your car keys beside your bed at night. If you hear a noise outside your home or someone trying to get in your house, just press the alarm button for your car. The alarm will be set off, and the horn will continue to sound until either you turn it off or the car battery dies.

DID YOU KNOW

You have very little time in reserve but you feel comfortable because you have purchased short term-disability. So you know that if something happens and you cannot work you will have money coming in. But, huh-oh you have an injury at work; will your short-term disability be able to assist? No, if you have an industrial injury your short-term disability does not pay. If you have questions on your individual short-term disability, please call your individual insurance company to get clarification.

N.E.A.T.S.

If you have changed agencies, or have taken a class and have not gotten confirmation etc., remember to update your NEATS e-mail. This can be done on the NEATS homepage under the "Update My Contact Information". Or when you have a life status change or a change in your beneficiary be sure to update in three areas:

PERS (retirement)
PEBP (death benefit)
NEATS (payroll)

Ice and Snow, Take It Slow!

Use slower acceleration and slower speeds. Avoid heavy steering and braking. Allow extra time to reach your destination during inclement weather. It is not worth putting your own life or the lives of others in danger to save time.

- **Drive with your headlights on.**
- **Don't get overconfident with four-wheel drive. It won't help you stop any faster.**
- **Avoid using cruise control or overdrive. Don't let your car make a bad decision for you.**
- **If you have anti-lock brakes, press the pedal down firmly and hold it. If you don't, gently pump the pedal.**
- **Look farther ahead in traffic. Actions by other drivers will alert you to problems and give you extra reaction time.**
- **Slow down when approaching intersections, off-ramps, bridges or shady spots. These all have potential to develop black ice.**

You know how books have a table of contents that explains what's inside? Or maybe you've received a toy that came with a diagram that identified each small piece. Nutrition labels are like that, They tell you what's inside the food you're eating.

The Nutrition Facts food label gives you information about which nutrients are in the food. Your body needs the right combination of nutrients to work properly and grow. The Nutrition Facts food label is printed on the outside of packaged food.

Most nutrients are measured in grams, also written as g. Some nutrients are measured in milligrams, or mg. Milligrams are very tiny - there are one thousand milligrams in a gram. Other information on the label is given in percentages. These numbers are based on eating 2,000 calories in a day, the amount that many school-age kids eat. A calorie is a unit of energy, a way of expressing how much energy you would get by eating a certain food.

NINE OUT OF TEN DRIVERS DISTRACTED BEHIND THE WHEEL

A national study from FindLaw.com reveals that 91 percent of drivers surveyed have engaged in distracted driving. The most common activities of multitasking drivers are drinking beverages, eating, talking on the phone, sending or receiving text messages, applying makeup, sending or receiving e-mail, and reading. Certain activities are more prevalent among younger drivers between the ages of 18 and 34. FindLaw.com Editor and Attorney Stephanie Rahlfs says, "Many states and localities have laws specifically prohibiting activities such as using a cell phone or sending a text message while driving. In addition, several states have laws that hold drivers accountable for distractions that could contribute to an accident." Be alert and keep your eyes on the road.

Workers' Comp
Question of the Quarter:
Can I Question An Injury Or Accident?

Question: I am their supervisor and I know that this injury did not occur at work. Do I still need to fill out a C-3 if they have sought treatment?

Answer: Yes, an employer must fill out the C-3 within six working days of receipt of the C-4, no exceptions. It doesn't matter what the circumstances of the injury were (e.g., after normal working hours, injured off-premises, etc), it is still the supervisor's responsibility to complete the C-3 (NRS § 616C.045). However, if the supervisor (employer) doubts the validity of the claim, it is their responsibility to fill in the box on the C-3 that asks if the validity of the claims is doubted. It is important for the supervisor to include as much information as possible. If you need more room you can use a separate piece of paper regarding the incident. The third party administrator will take this into consideration when reviewing the claim for compensability.

Be sure and check out our award-winning website at: www.risk.state.nv.us