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## Safety Committees are Worth the Effort

By Mike Marinan, Director of Member Services - Public Risk Underwriters of Florida, Inc.



Ensuring the safety of the workplace and your employees is a top priority. Improving safety at your entity is one way to help mitigate risk and provide a positive workplace environment for your employees.

Forming a safety committee at your organization can help you reduce the likelihood of on-the-job accidents, injuries, and illnesses. When employees at your facility are actively involved in safety programs and culture, it can create a sense of personal investment and ownership in the safety and overall success.

Safety committees take time and effort, they need to be organized, managed, recorded and scheduled, but it can all be worth it.

Here are four ways that safety committees can help empower employees and promote better workplace conditions for everyone:

### 1. They Give Everyone a Voice in Safety

Instead of making safety the sole responsibility of the individual that has been given the safety responsibility within the entity, creating a safety committee means that everyone has ownership in creating a better environment. Safety committees that pull in employees from different supervisory levels and departments ensure that everyone's experience counts.

### 2. They Help Identify Safety Issues Faster

With safety committee members spread out through a variety of departments, potential risks that may come up during the workday are quickly identified. As safety advocates, committee members are empowered to call out potentially risky behavior and stop it before someone is hurt. This proactive approach greatly reduces the chances of additional injury.

### 3. They Make Safety a Part of the Culture

By creating a safety committee and bringing in members from across all departments, organizations are sending a strong message that the safety of every employee matters to them. A safety committee can also take on projects and give updates as they work to improve safety across the organization.



## 4. They Let Employees Create Lasting Solutions

Instead of going with a “one-size-fits-all” safety plan, members of the safety committee can use their own knowledge of the company to create customized safety solutions that fit with the way the employees work. They are able to follow up with these plans and make sure that they’re effective.

The basic function of every safety committee should be to encourage and maintain a safe work environment. A safety committee should foster a sense of ownership by giving employees an opportunity to directly improve safety and reduce injuries within the organization, while enhancing communication between management and employees.

To achieve this, a commitment to safety must become a shared responsibility between management and employees. Safety committee members are responsible for developing and reviewing safety procedures and policies, investigating, and reviewing accidents and communicating safety issues or policies to company employees.

### Guidelines for Success

The makeup of the safety committee can vary depending on the needs, size, and type of the organization. Consider the following elements when creating a safety committee:

- **Appoint a chairperson or leader:** This person must display leadership skills such as organization, dedication, excellent working knowledge of the entity and respect from other members.
- **Diverse membership:** The committee should be comprised of an equal number of management and non-management employees that represent all areas within the entity. Limiting the size of the committee to 4 – 12 members will help keep meetings moving and to allow for everyone to be involved.
- **Effective meetings:** Meetings are usually scheduled quarterly with a planned agenda and last no more than 1 hour. Limiting meetings to 1 hour keeps things moving and the agenda on track. In addition, it limits the time employees must spend away from their daily job duties.



- **Set an agenda:** The agenda of a meeting may vary, but typical ones include record of attendance, review of recent accidents/injuries, unfinished or new business, safety inspection reports, special projects and/or presentations.
- **Document the committee's efforts:** A written record of the meeting's proceedings should be prepared by the committee's designated secretary. Previous month's meeting minutes should be discussed at each meeting, as well as any follow-up actions from the meetings. Meeting minutes should be distributed to all members, posted for all company employees to read, as well as sent to key management personnel. Maximum benefit will be obtained by publicizing the committee's efforts. Those benefits include increased safety awareness and keeping employees and management updated on the progress of the committee.



All our members can benefit from having an organized and functional safety committee staffed with involved, contributing employees. A safety committee will not only create a safer work environment, but also help involve other employees in the monitoring, education, investigation and evaluation of the safety effort.

Additionally, the commitment to safety can impact the company's bottom line by reducing the number of costly accidents and injuries.

### Preferred would like to welcome the following new members:

BridgePrep Academy, Inc.

BridgePrep Academy Hollywood Hills, Inc.

BridgePrep Academy of Duval Charter, Inc.

BridgePrep Academy of Palm Beach Charter School, Inc.

BridgePrep Academy of Tampa, Inc., d.b.a. BridgePrep Academy of Riverview

Volusia Charter School of Excellence, Inc., d.b.a. Ivy Hawn Charter School of the Arts

The One Room School House Project, Inc.

Micanopy Academy, Inc.

Middleton A CDD



## Municipal Special Event Safety

By Chris Kittleson, Director of Loss Control Technical Services - Public Risk Underwriters of Florida, Inc.



Municipalities often provide their citizens with special events such as fairs, parades, and holiday/seasonal events such as Fourth of July Fireworks, Fall Festivals or Halloween. These events whether the municipality or an outside organization is sponsoring them may create liabilities and hazards that the municipality must control.

When a municipality decides to use their own resources to conduct a special event there are a multitude of potential exposures that would require planning to more effectively control hazards depending on the type of the event. An excellent example of "Special Event Safety" is the City of North Miami's annual Halloween Haunted Trail event that is held at the City's Enchanted Forest Park.

The Enchanted Forest Park, which is a 22-acre oak filled park and green space, is completely fenced in with access for pedestrians at one main entrance. The park event is divided into three main sections, the haunted trails, hayrides, and children's fun zone. In addition, the event includes bounce houses, games, face painting and food. The city averages approximately 2500 patrons within a span of three hours for the event.

A review of incidents indicates there has been minimal injuries reported, which speaks volumes to the effectiveness of the City's extensive pre-planning and safety coordination endeavors. The event planning takes place six months out from the actual date, which is initiated by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Other City departments assist during the planning stages such as, Risk Management/Safety, City Engineer, Building Department, Police, as well as Volunteers. In addition, the Miami-Dade Fire Department is notified prior to the event.

The basic plan includes the formation of ideas, budget, layout of the event and advertising.

The following is a list of North Miami's pre-event planning activities that are used to coordinate the event:

- Recruitment of Volunteers.
- Review of budget and supplies, three months prior to event.
- Consideration of event insurance coverage and hold harmless/indemnity agreements.
- Trees cleared, dead branches trimmed, pathways evaluated for clearance, one month prior to event.
- Comprehensive structural evaluation by City Engineer/ Building Department for shop made structures, i.e., Haunted House and existing infrastructure, i.e., canal bridges, one month prior to event.
- Review of water's edge is evaluated for steepness and areas marked for fencing.







- Areas for Scare Zones are marked with paint for guidance in accordance with event plan.
- Nighttime inspection to assess lighting conditions.
- Sidewalks are evaluated for slip, trip and fall hazards and repaired as required.
- A safety meeting and walk through is conducted by City Safety Officer to evaluate event plans on-site, two weeks prior to event.
- Establishment of emergency evacuation locations, exit signage and fire extinguisher stations are identified and reviewed with Staff.

- A full-dress rehearsal of Scare Zones are reviewed with Staff in the evening to correctly place lighting, one week prior to event.
- Night training of Staff and Volunteers takes place, including a full workshop on etiquette, scare tactics, safety, and evacuation routes.
- Final walk through including full lighting review/ placement as well as evaluation of delineation of pedestrian walkways to determine if lines are properly located as per plan.
- Final walk through, one day prior to event.
- Event execution, day of event.
- Clean up and removal of temporary structures, day after the event.



In some instances, organizations including civic groups and non-profit charities are available to sponsor and participate in special events. Special events provide these organizations a means of promoting their groups as well as fund-raising. These organizations usually do an excellent job of securing volunteers, selecting vendors, and providing additional Staff to police the event once it is underway.

Before trying to seek the participation of an outside organization(s) to sponsor and event, the municipality should evaluate how hazardous the event may be. To do this, the municipality should evaluate the activity itself, any physical activity the event may require of participants and exposure to the participants.

For a municipality, using such organizations may make it easier to transfer the risk thus minimizing its exposure if the special event results in claims of any kind.

Please contact your Preferred Loss Control Consultant for assistance with special event safety planning.

## Hurricane Scaping - Making Your Landscaping Storm Wise

Submitted by Pubic Risk Underwriters of Florida, Inc. - Safety & Risk Management Department

With the recent increase of hurricane activity, serious consideration should be given to hurricane-scaping landscaping. Hurricane-scaping is a process of taking the necessary steps to modify your landscaping to reduce storm damage.

The process consists of selecting storm wise trees, addressing inland flooding/storm surge exposures to your landscaping as well as providing ongoing landscape maintenance.

Post storm analysis indicates that native trees/shrubs that are even branched with low centers of gravity and have deep root systems fare better in hurricane-force winds.



Species like sea grapes and gumbo limbo quickly shed their leaves in hurricane-force winds, but the structures of these even-branched trees tend to remain intact, and the foliage quickly re-grows. Native palms such as coconut, cabbage and thatch palms are also highly adapted to high winds and are known to survive unscathed.

When planting trees one should consider their eventual size/impact to avoid future conflicts with sidewalks, driveways, buildings, fences, and power lines.

Mature tree height is extremely important to consider under power lines. When trees are allowed to grow into power lines, they pose a year-round maintenance issue for the power company and increase the chances that power will be interrupted after a storm

Flood tolerance and local storm-surge potential should also be taken into consideration. If areas are prone to inland flooding, select landscaping that is flood tolerant.

For coastal landscaping you need to consider the possibility of a storm surge that could bring substantial amounts of salt water inland. Selection of salt-tolerant species such as coconut palms, sea grape and gumbo limbo can be utilized to minimize post-storm damage.

As part of an overall landscape maintenance plan pre/post storm preparation activities are equally important. It is always recommended to work with a Certified Arborist in planning for hurricane season to determine what needs to be completed pre/post hurricane as well as what type of tree root systems are less damaging to sidewalks/driveways.





# SPECIAL ARTICLE

In advance of hurricane season brown fronds and seed pods on palms should be removed along with coconuts and harvest items, i.e., fruits, which are mature enough to pick. In addition, provide for the staking of small trees to secure them against heavy winds.

After a hurricane, take time to properly assess landscaping damage. Secure and/or remove hazards and consider delaying the pruning and removal of trees and shrubs for as long as possible. The damage to the landscaping may look severe initially, but wind-whipped trees and shrubs can improve in appearance in a matter of months.

When dealing with flooded areas, check the drainage system to remove any blockage to assist in providing further damage to water-intolerant species.

Please refer to the Storm-Wise Landscaping table below to help you learn more about landscaping that is better suited to survive hurricanes:



Silver Buttonwood

Plant Type	Wind Tolerance	Flood Tolerance	Salt Tolerance	Mature Size (H x W)
<b>Jamaican Caper</b>	Medium	Medium	High	10' x 4'
<b>Royal Palm</b>	High	High	Medium	80' x 7'
<b>Red Bay</b>	Medium	High	Low	40' x 30'
<b>Buttonwood</b>	High	High	High	20' x 25'
<b>Black Ironwood</b>	High	Medium	Medium	25' x 10'
<b>Pond Apple</b>	Medium	High	Low	20' x 15'
<b>Dahoon Holly</b>	Medium	High	Low	25' x 15'
<b>Cabbage Palm</b>	High	High	High	40' x 5'
<b>Sea Grape</b>	Medium-High	Medium	High	30' x 25'
<b>Gumbo Limbo</b>	Medium-High	Medium	High	40' x 35'
<b>Live Oak</b>	High	Medium	Low	60' x 40'
<b>Cypress</b>	Medium	High	Low	80' x 25'
<b>Coconut Palm</b>	High	Medium	High	60' x 5'
<b>Florida Thatch Palm</b>	High	Medium	High	20' x 3'



Dahoon Holly



Cypress



Sea Grape



# *SAVE THE DATE*

## *2023 PREFERRED MEMBER EDUCATION DAY*

*Marriott Orlando World Center  
8701 World Center Drive  
Orlando, FL 32821*

*Invitation with event  
details coming soon!*

*When: Wednesday - February 1, 2023*

*Time: 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM*

*Preferred*  
**PGIT** GOVERNMENTAL  
INSURANCE TRUST





# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## The Town of Jupiter - A Safe Place to Work

Submitted by Chris Kittleson, Director of Loss Control Technical Services - Public Risk Underwriters of Florida, Inc.

Preferred would like to recognize the Town of Jupiter for their efforts in providing a safe workplace for their employees. Under the direction of Daisy Sand, Risk Manager, the Town of Jupiter has taken the initiative to formalize safety/risk management programs, policies, and procedures to include the following:

**TRAINERY LMS ONLINE TRAINING** – When in-person safety training was not possible because of COVID restrictions, the Member contracted with Trainery Online Training to provide virtual safety training for staff. Staff identified twelve topics that they felt would be informative and useful. The employees have provided positive feedback about this format and have been providing the member with their completed certifications for their files. The Town of Jupiter learned of this program through Preferred, and because they were a Preferred member, they received a discount.



**FIRE SAFETY/ACTIVE SHOOTER EMERGENCY TRAINING** – The Member worked with Palm Beach County Fire Rescue and Jupiter Police to develop a fire safety policy/plan and Active Shooter training refresher. Currently, employees are required to attend an Active Shooter training as part of onboarding or bi-annual training. This additional training will help employees stay vigilant. In addition, the fire safety procedures will ensure that employees are aware of what to do if a fire emergency arises.

**HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM** – The Member worked with a safety consultant to identify positions in the Town that are subjected to extreme noise levels. Employees in these positions were included in the Town's Hearing Conservation Program, and baseline testing was established in 2021. Annual re-testing for these positions was completed on July 12th. No incidents of occupational hearing loss were found.



**DRIVING RECORDS** – The Town instituted a driving record policy requiring a review of each employee's driving record every other year. This is in addition to the initial review when first hired as part of new hire background checks. The Member completed the driving record search in fiscal year 2022 with no reportable incidents.

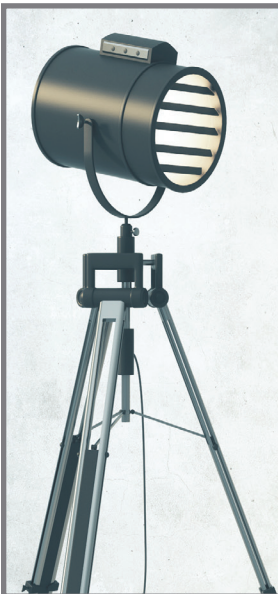


## City of Marathon Upgrades Walkways/Roadways with Vanguard ADA Systems

Submitted by Chris Kittleson, Director of Loss Control Technical Services - Public Risk Underwriters of Florida, Inc.

As a result of the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, which resulted in much of the City of Marathon's roadways being under water, the Member has upgraded their walkways/roadways with Vanguard ADA Systems warning systems. This was necessary since their roadway's original markings had deteriorated.

Preferred would like to recognize the City of Marathon for taking the initiative to upgrade their infrastructure to reduce and/or eliminate the potential for slip, trip & fall related hazards as well as providing accommodation for the handicapped.



## BE IN THE MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

We would like to share your best practices, success stories, and the accomplishments of your organization with fellow members in an upcoming edition of the Preferred News.

If interested, members should contact their Preferred Loss Control Consultant.



# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## Town of Davie Issues Safety Proclamation for National Safety Month

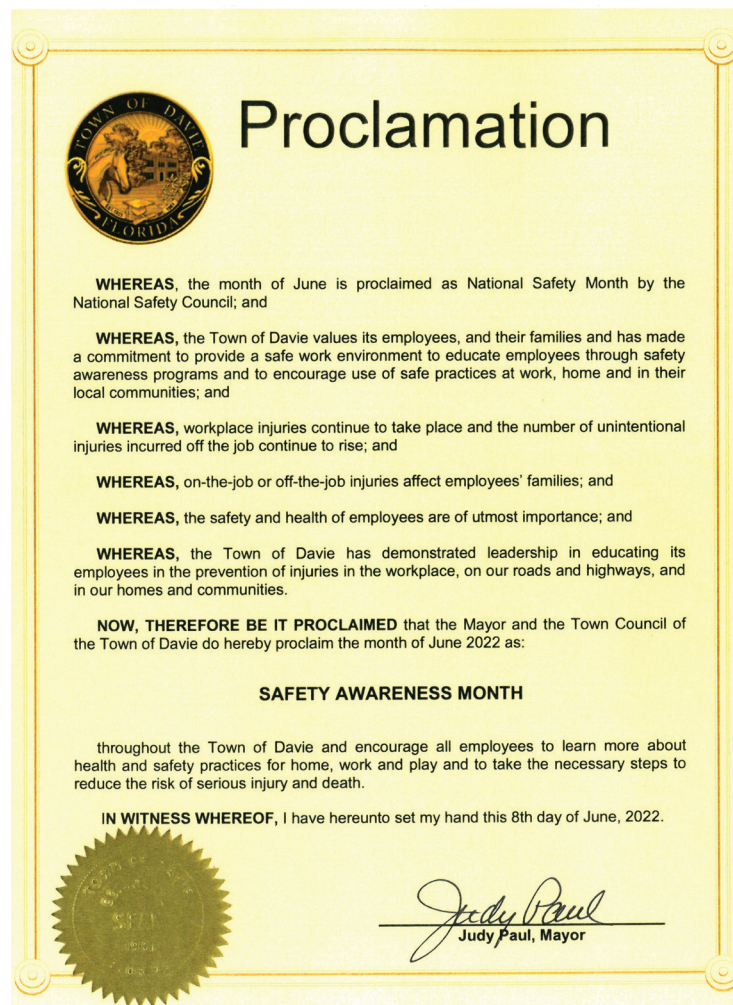
Submitted by Chris Kittleson, Director of Loss Control Technical Services - Public Risk Underwriters of Florida, Inc.

The Town of Davie recognized the Risk Management department at their Town Council meeting of 06/08/22. Mayor Judy Paul along with the Town Council, presented Mr. Jose Lugo, Risk Manager with a safety proclamation as part of National Safety Month. Mr. Jose Lugo, Risk Manager, along with Staff has been instrumental in providing continues improvements to the Town's risk profile, which has made the Town of Davie a safer place to work, live and visit.

Observed annually in June, National Safety Month focuses on reducing leading causes of injury, illness, and death at work, on the road and in our homes and communities. Identifying risks and improving safety standards in the workplace, at home and in the community protects everyone.



Pictured: (L to R) Chris Kittleson, Director of Loss Control Technical Services - Public Risk Underwriters of Florida, Inc. & Grace Garagozzo, HR Director; Jose Lugo, Risk Manager; Jessica Ginter, HR Technician - Town of Davie



## One bad fall could change it all!

Please practice good fall prevention in preparation for the holiday season.



- The Preferred Loss Control Team -



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