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# THE ALLIANCE ADVISOR

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## Comp Alliance Joins LinkedIn

The Comp Alliance strives to keep members informed of the latest industry and program news. Stay connected with us as we post our upcoming training dates, resources, safety tips, industry updates, and much more.



### Village of Millerton Receives Comp Alliance Leadership Award at NYCOM's Fall Training School

*Village Recognized For Leadership its Efforts to Keep its Employees Safe*  
September 13, 2022

Saratoga Springs, NY – In recognition of its commitment to minimize employees' time lost due to workplace injury, the Village of Millerton was presented with the 2022 G. Jeffrey Haber Leadership Award by the New York State Municipal Workers' Compensation Alliance (Comp Alliance). The award was presented as a testament to the efforts the village has made to maintain a safe work environment, its commitment to training employees and for helping injured employees return to work expeditiously.

The award was announced to more than 400 city and village officials from across the state who were in attendance at the Fall Training School of the New York State Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officials (NYCOM). The award was accepted by Village of Millerton Mayor Jenn Najdek.

"The village's efforts to promote the safe return to work for its employees and its commitment to establishing a safe work environment have minimized the amount of time its employees lose due to workplace injury is truly an example for all of our members," Comp Alliance Executive Director Michael Kenneally said.

Comp Alliance is a workers' compensation group self-insurance program exclusively for New York State municipalities. Formed in 1994 with eight initial members, the Comp Alliance is approaching 350 members throughout the state. It is sponsored by NYCOM and the Association of Towns of the State of New York.

NYCOM serves city and village officials by providing training, information services, technical and legal assistance, advocacy and access to exceptional insurance programs such as the Comp Alliance.



**Jennifer Najdek**  
Mayor of the  
Village of Millerton

**Mike Kenneally**  
Comp Alliance  
Executive Director

## Conducting Incident Investigations

New York State does not require municipalities to conduct formal incident investigations. The Comp Alliance views the investigation of a workplace incident as a vital step in acknowledging the incident. A standard review of hazards provides an opportunity to identify risks associated with the loss and follow up with the implementation of corrective measures necessary to prevent future incidents.

When an injury or near-miss occurs in the municipal workplace, finding out why is an essential first step to eliminating a future incident. A robust investigation process can make provide improvements in safety at your facility. An investigation into minor incidents can identify factors leading up to the injury and remove hazards.

One crucial element of an accident investigation is timing. Get on top of the incident quickly to preserve the scene and conduct discussions with co-workers. You want to understand the circumstances at the time of the incident and perhaps recreate the accident scene. Conserving the setting will provide a better background on the event's cause.

If the hazard was immediately removed post-accident, the investigation can still:

- identify the cause of the injury;
- verify that the threat is removed;
- confirm that similar risks do not exist within other areas or departments;
- conclude that the cause of the incident has been permanently removed and won't cause future injuries.

Employee interviews are vital as part of an incident investigation. The discussion aims to get the facts from employees involved or who witnessed the incident. Witnesses should be instructed to provide an account of what they saw, not an opinion or speculation about the event. A good interview involves talking to employees individually about the incident, conducting them quickly after the incident, and including supervisors.

Interviews and evidence gathered during investigations should help to answer the five W's:

**Who** was injured, witnessed it, requested the work to be done, and responded?

**What** happened, what was the victim doing (active or watching), and if this was not the victim's regular job, what was it?

**When** did the incident occur, and when was any equipment last inspected?

**Where** did the incident occur, where was the victim positioned, where were the witnesses, and where was the supervisor?

**Why** was the victim injured, who caused the injury, why was anything different this time compared with previous work, and why were there staffing changes?

Investigations may also raise the following questions:

- has anyone been injured performing similar jobs or working with matching equipment;
- has this employee been injured before while completing this task;
- were any concerns about the safety of the task, equipment, or environmental conditions brought to management's attention before the incident?

## **Conducting Incident Investigations (Continued)**

OSHA advises looking beyond "immediate causes" when investigating an incident or analyzing the information gathered. It can often be misleading to conclude that carelessness or failure to follow a procedure alone was the cause of an incident. Failure to discover the underlying or root causes of the incident will prevent systemic changes and measures needed to prevent future incidents. It is essential to ask why a shortcoming has existed and not been previously addressed.

A recent injury example shows how incident investigations can improve organizational safety controls. An employee was injured getting his chain saw from his truck. He grabbed the chain part of the saw and sustained cuts to his hand. The investigation pointed out that while the highway department does use chain guards for their saws, this saw was borrowed from another department and did not have a guard in place. It was decided that all chain saws from all departments will be equipped with chain guards during any transportation process and when stored.

When an investigation is concluded, it's time to implement corrective actions and track them. Remedial measures will be immediately implemented post-accident. Information sharing is critical with supervisors within and outside the department. This creates a positive cascading effect that includes standard operating procedures and training. Training modifications will also be required if policy and procedural updates are recommended.

A properly conducted incident investigation will ultimately reduce or eliminate workplace injuries. Accidents can happen in the workplace, but gathering information to find the root cause can assist in identifying the threat and removing the hazard for future injuries. Contact the Comp Alliance Risk Management Director, Robert Blaisdell, at [rblaisdell@wrightinsurance.com](mailto:rblaisdell@wrightinsurance.com) for more details on the investigation process.

## **The Comp Alliance Welcomes Maria Luciano**

Wright Risk Management and the Workers' Comp Alliance are pleased to announce that effective September 1, 2022, Maria Luciano will be taking over for Howard Bitner as he scales back his role with the Comp Alliance.

Maria comes to us with a long and successful history of front-line adjusting, supervising, and management experience in New York workers' compensation. Maria has a Bachelor's Degree from Long Island University and holds a New York State Casualty Adjuster license.

Maria is excited about assuming her new role and is looking forward to developing relationships with our members. Maria wants all Alliance members to know that providing them with excellent customer service will be her number one goal.



**Contact Maria Luciano for any  
claims-related questions or concerns.**

**Maria Luciano**  
**Workers' Compensation Claims Manager**

Email: [mluciano@wrightinsurance.com](mailto:mluciano@wrightinsurance.com)  
Mobile: 516-357-4135

## An Employee is Injured: The Employer's First Steps

The Comp Alliance recognizes that claim investigations can be difficult at times. If you are not familiar with our claims investigation process or the completion of the three-page C-2F form, we have you covered. We developed a quick checklist that provides simple, step-by-step instructions on investigating a new claim and completing and submitting the C-2F form.

The checklist is included in each new member's start-up kit and available on our website at [www.compalliance.org](http://www.compalliance.org).

Among the topics covered in the material:

- an employer's priority in the event of an injury;
- the initial investigation of the injury;
- a page-by-page breakdown of the C-2F form w/ instructions for completion;
- available options for submitting the claim form to us;
- what the injured employee needs to know regarding initial medical treatment and prescriptions.

The most crucial stage of a work-related injury occurs at the time the injury occurs. When the employer submits a fully completed and accurate C-2F form to us, our adjuster can provide the needed communication and assistance to your injured worker.



## Upcoming Virtual Training Seminars

The Comp Alliance has several Live Virtual Video Conference Trainings scheduled for our members throughout the month of October.

PESH-mandated topics of Workplace Violence, Right-To-Know - Chemical Safety, and Blood-Borne Pathogens will be covered.



- Thursday 10/13 10am - noon
- Monday 10/17 10am - noon
- Friday 10/21 10am - noon
- Monday 10/24 10am - noon
- Tuesday 10/25 1pm - 3pm
- Thursday 10/27 5pm - 7pm
- Monday 10/31 10am - noon

## Upcoming HAZWOPER Schedule

The Comp Alliance also has scheduled several virtual training programs covering the mandatory PESH-required topic of HAZWOPER. This awareness level seminar is required for municipal employees who may be the first upon a hazardous waste emergency on-site or off-site. This training is recommended for highway, department of public works, and water and sewer sanitation departments.

- Thursday 10/13 8am - 8:30am
- Tuesday 10/25 8am - 8:30am



**Email Robert Blaisdell at [rblaisdell@wrightinsurance.com](mailto:rblaisdell@wrightinsurance.com) to register for any of these training sessions. Attendance is limited.**

Please continue to check your email and the Comp Alliance website [www.compalliance.org](http://www.compalliance.org) for additional dates later in the year.