



**Unprecedented Service Through Unprecedented Times**

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**Comp Alliance 2020 Annual Report**

In 2020, the Comp Alliance continued to prove its strength by adding members, maintaining sound financial policies and giving back to members. We are especially proud of our innovative programs rewarding the loyalty and safety of our members. These programs and initiatives are highlighted in our 2020 Annual Membership Report, available by [clicking here](#) and signing in to your account. We thank all of our members and professional partners for your support as we look forward to building upon our history of financial strength and exceptional service.



## Comp Alliance Presents at the AOT Annual Meeting and Training School and NYCOM Legislative – Virtual Conference

The 2021 Association of Towns (AOT) Annual Meeting and Training School and the 2021 NYCOM Winter Legislative Conference were virtual educational events, with all sessions conducted online as concerns over the safety of in-person meetings persist.

While we missed seeing our members in person, the Comp Alliance was involved in the educational programs at both of these conferences. The presentations listed below can be viewed by registered program members by visiting [www.compalliance.org](http://www.compalliance.org) and signing into the Comp Alliance Academy/Webinars Section.



### *Annual Meeting and Training School Presentations*

**First Responders Injuries - Cause and Corrections** - With the potential for employees to sustain serious injury while responding to an emergency response call, police and fire departments represent a large risk for municipalities. Administrators should understand how these first responder injuries are likely to occur in order to recommend improvements to prevent them in the future. This program reviewed the frequency of police officer and fire fighter injuries, identified the cause of injuries and what body parts are most affected, including those losses with the most severe impact on departments, and recommended some remedies to reduce these types of injuries.

**Workers' Comp in a Pandemic** - An open-panel discussion on workplace exposures during the on-going pandemic, how municipal operations can succeed when proper precautionary procedures are followed, how does the aspect of working from home effect workplace injuries, and how can departments maintain safe operations when workers are out sick or quarantined in these times. Our approach to investigating and responding to COVID 19 claims received to date, the legislative response in New York as well as other states, and thoughts regarding the future of COVID in the claims arena.



### *NYCOM Winter Legislative Conference Presentation*

**COVID Induced Labor Issues** - This presentation focuses on the challenges of managing a public workplace during the COVID pandemic. The panelists discussed the most recent labor and employment developments, including employee testing, vaccinations, leave-time, workers' compensation claims and maintaining workplace safety.

**Comp Alliance Presents the Town of Owasco with the G. Jeffrey Haber Leadership Award**

It is with great pleasure that the Comp Alliance recently presented the Town of Owasco with the annual G. Jeffrey Haber Leadership Award. Michael Kenneally, Comp Alliance Executive Director presented the award to Edward Wagner, Supervisor for the Town of Owasco at the Association of Towns (AOT) breakfast at the Virtual Annual Conference on February 16, 2021. A video of the presentation is available by visiting [www.youtube.com/watch?v=vCJF4wp\\_9n8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vCJF4wp_9n8) and also is available under the news section of the Comp Alliance website.

The Town of Owasco did an exceptional job this year coordinating with the Comp Alliance loss control department during the pandemic and participating in all of our webinars and training modules to help maintain the safest possible workplace and compliance during the COVID pandemic. The leadership that the town has shown is an example for all program members.

This award is presented in honor of G. Jeffrey (Jeff) Haber. Jeff served as the Executive Director for the Association of Towns of the State of New York from 1985-2012, and is the founder and first chairman of the Comp Alliance. His vision to create a workers' compensation program tailored to the unique needs of New York State's local governments became a reality through his leadership. What started in 1994 with just eight members and less than \$500,000 has grown to a program with more than 300 members. Congratulations again to the Town of Owasco on this accomplishment.

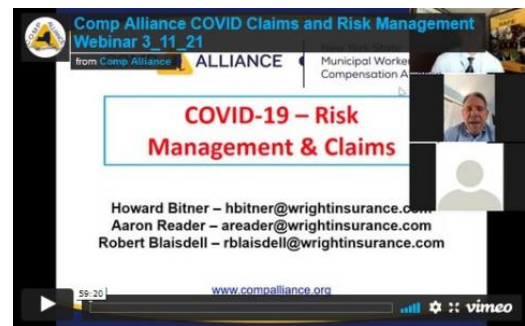


**Recent Comp Alliance Member Webinars**

The following Comp Alliance webinars from March 2021 have been posted to the Comp Alliance Academy Webinars Section which registered members can access by visiting [www.compalliance.org](http://www.compalliance.org).

On March 11, 2021 the Comp Alliance presented a COVID-19 Risk Management and Claims Webinar. This webinar included the following:

- COVID-19 operations and controls
- Return to work safety guidelines and how they should be implemented
- Safe work guidelines post-pandemic – maintaining OSHA's General Duty Clause
- Latest on New York State, CDC and other recommendations
- Virtual training updates – the latest on Comp Alliance Risk Management programs.
- Working at home claim discussion – challenges to accident investigation, how to maintain control, and common workplace exposures while working from home.
- Vaccination Programs including vaccine mandates and implications.



On Wednesday, March 24, 2021 and Wednesday, March 31, 2021 Comp Alliance, Director of Loss Control, Robert Blaisdell presented webinars which reviewed the types of injuries sustained by police and fire department employees

Municipal members of the Comp Alliance with law enforcement and firefighting operations have the potential to sustain significant injuries while completing required job functions. Municipal officials, law enforcement, and firefighter administrators should understand the cause of these first responder injuries in order to implement improvements to control them in the future. These webinars review the types of injuries sustained by police and fire department employees, including the causes which are most frequent in number, to those that pose the most severe injury potential. The programs then reviewed risk management practices to implement in an effort to decrease these first responder injuries. The webinars include concrete, practical corrective measures to assist members in controlling the causes of these workplace injuries.

Recorded versions of all three webinars have been posted to the Comp Alliance Academy Webinars section for program members to view.

### Wright Risk Management Claim Department Launches New Claim Handling Software

Wright Risk Management (WRM), the Comp Alliance Program Manager is excited to announce an upgrade of its claim handling software which was launched during the first week of April 2021. This system is an updated version of the previous one from American Technical Services.

The advantages of the system include more modern, web based architecture which allows access through a web browser.



The system will also improve the experience for members and increase member usability and access to information. This includes claim reporting and monitoring.

The Comp Alliance and WRM arranged for much of the installation of the new system to take place during the Easter holiday weekend, in order to minimize any impact the switchover might cause on the production of our services.

We are looking forward to working in our new computer environment, which will allow us to provide greater service to all Members of the Comp Alliance and their injured employees.



**Comp Alliance Live Virtual Safety Seminar Schedule Announced Through the End of May**

The COVID-19 pandemic has suspended in-person and on-site safety trainings by the Comp Alliance Risk Management Team. Nevertheless, the Comp Alliance conducts live virtual trainings to help our program members meet their annual PESH compliance guidelines. These virtual trainings are conducted regularly, and our current safety training schedule can be found on the Comp Alliance Events Calendar (more information below).

With more than 30 training seminars scheduled in April and May, members are sure to find one at a date and time that is convenient. Please visit the Comp Alliance Events Calendar to find one at a convenient date and time for you. The calendar, which is located at [www.compalliance.org/events/calendar.html](http://www.compalliance.org/events/calendar.html), is your go to location for a listing of all upcoming Comp Alliance safety trainings, conferences, presentations, events and more.

If you have any questions related to the Zoom Live Trainings and registering please contact Robert Blaisdell by emailing [rblaisdell@wrightinsurance.com](mailto:rblaisdell@wrightinsurance.com).



**Workplace Violence Prevention for Public Entities**

With the recent mass shooting event at a supermarket in Boulder, Colorado, in which 10 people were shot and killed by a single gunman, it's a good time to review your workplace violence prevention policy and procedures. It's events like these that make us all re-examine the safety of our workplace – could an event such as this occur in our facility, how secure is my workplace, what would I do if I heard shots fired in my office building, where would I go, what would my co-workers do, etc.? There are many questions which you can ask and several solutions to those questions. Sometimes, however, the best laid plans often go awry, and the best outcome is to minimize damage. This safety article will look at measures to reduce the potential for workplace violence incidents at your work setting and minimize the damage that may be encountered by employees while at work.



In 2006, New York State enacted the Workplace Violence Prevention Act. The legislation requires public employers to develop policies and procedures to minimize and prevent workplace violence. It goes further in purpose, requesting municipalities ensure that the risk of workplace assaults and homicides is evaluated by public employers and their employees, and that employers design and implement protection programs to minimize the hazards of workplace violence. Within the legislation, each municipality is required to adopt a formal plan, post a policy statement, complete a security risk evaluation, conduct annual employee training and complete an annual workplace violence review.



A vital part of this legislation is to assess the potential risks of violence at each location and implement protective measures to minimize these risks. This risk evaluation only had to be completed once to comply with the legislation, but it's a good idea, since the Workplace Violence Prevention Act is approaching its 15<sup>th</sup> year, to re-assess your municipal workplace for updated violence potential and methods of prevention. Understand as well that the majority of workplace violence incidents occurring at municipal settings are most likely to occur "where the decision makers are located", that is to say, at municipal offices, town/village/city halls, where mayor and supervisor offices are located, where board meetings are held, and in/around court rooms. Focus initial improvements on these areas then move on to additional municipal facilities.

Proper risk management considers the implementation of controls when hazards are present. A part of this process is to consider how easily controls can be implemented and how effective the controls will be versus corrective measures that will cost more, take more time to implement but likely to have a greater effect on keeping employees safe. This is a cost/benefit analysis and can play a significant role in the assessment of workplace violence conditions in your workplace. Select controls based on their applicability to the mission or goal of controlling workplace violence incidents. Conduct an intelligent review of all factors and implement loss control measures accordingly. Contact the Comp Alliance Risk Management Department for ideas and assistance in this area.

The workplace violence risk assessment includes an inspection of your municipal facilities, evaluation of the safety of the facility from the aspect of violence prevention, gathering employee input on how safe they feel at work, and includes both interior and exterior features of each building. This security assessment reviews the status of security features including exterior lighting, public entrances, public access to employees, egress methods, employee shifts, work completed alone, and other factors. This evaluation can be completed by municipal staff, but the law does require that an authorized employee representative (if there is one) assist with the process. New York State developed a sample form to assist with the evaluation of your physical environment.

<https://dol.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/03/appendix-2-b-sample-evaluation-of-physical-environment.pdf>

With the completion of the assessment, you are likely to find that some improvements, directed at the goal of making the workplace safer from violent incidents, are in order. Ideas about improving safety might include the follow:

- Single point of building access/Controlled building access
- Assigning a check-in/reception area for visitors/customers
- Installing barriers for staff, to separate them from customers
- Providing an egress, should staff, court, board members need to escape quickly
- Improve parking lot lighting
- Minimize times when employees work alone
- Secure facilities when employees do work alone
- Install panic alarms to notify police quickly in the event of a violent situation
- Install surveillance cameras – interior and exterior
- Station security personnel at/near facility entrances



In addition to the physical inspection of each facility, evaluate your staff and how capable they are of handling violent situations. The majority of municipal personnel, absent most law enforcement and fire department personnel are not at all equipped to deal with dangerous or emergency conditions. Consider implementing training programs aimed at heightening staff awareness to potential violence, training on de-escalation and conflict resolution for staff and board members, conducting routine emergency drills in your facilities, and implementing emergency notification protocols for law enforcement assistance. Emergency drills should include routine lockdown drills in which staff are informed of their responsibilities in the event of a violent situation – lock office doors, silence cell phones, remain calm and silent, clear halls of staff and customers, etc. Preparing for the event helps staff to respond calmly and quickly, and can save lives. Practice locking down facilities, securing offices, staff responsibilities, evacuations (when necessary), emergency notifications, and public assistance. Consider these same procedures during board meetings and court sessions, practice with all staff present, and inform applicable staff (highway, DPW, etc.) of the procedures as well as they are likely to be in the municipal center during the event.

When considering facility improvements, think about how your local school district has improved their school buildings for the anticipation and prevention of violent acts. They have likely improved building access through a single point of entry for all visitors and customers, secure all other entry doors with proximity card readers for employee access, conduct routine lock-down and lock-out drills, and installed emergency notification systems. All of this for the prevention of active shooter situations or to minimize the amount of damage they might inflict should they gain access inside a school building.

The municipal environment is slightly different that educational settings, but consideration of safety controls in anticipation of a violent situation can help to avoid them and minimize their deadly impact. Update your facility safety assessment, improvement corrective measures and train all staff on proper procedures during an active shooter situation, in an effort at improving facility security and employee safety.

The Comp Alliance can provide staff training to program members on workplace violence and prevention. We are currently conducting several of these live sessions virtually each week. For a complete listing of upcoming safety trainings please visit [www.compalliance.org](http://www.compalliance.org) and click on the events tab. The Comp Alliance also provides a recorded version of this and many other municipal safety training courses through the Comp Alliance Academy available to program members. The Comp Alliance also provides the opportunity to utilize the Safety Source Training Video Library at no additional cost to program members. Safety Source offers videos which can be helpful in training your staff on this topic If you have not yet registered for access to Safety Source, please send your request to [sroes@wrightinsurance.com](mailto:sroes@wrightinsurance.com).

## Stay Informed

The Comp Alliance strives to keep members informed of the latest industry and program news. Please visit us at [www.compalliance.org](http://www.compalliance.org) for the latest news, updated events calendar, safety articles, safety bulletins and more.

The Alliance also encourages members to visit us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/nycompalliance) @nycompalliance and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/nycompalliance).

