



# Safety SUCSESSES

## STARS Members Share Safety Practices

*Editor's note: This special newsletter highlights 40 effective safety and health practices used by members of the Professional Landcare Network's STARS (Safety Training Achieves Remarkable Success) program. This free program assists green industry companies in improving safety and reducing injury and incident rates and insurance claim costs. For more information on the STARS program, visit [landcarenetwork.org](http://landcarenetwork.org) or call (800) 395-2522.*

### Workers' Comp Payments Drop Nearly \$15,000 per Year

Many STARS member companies use "Safety Bingo" to generate interest and excitement in their safety programs. **Pro Scapes, Inc.**, in Jamesville, New York, started the game several years ago to lower the company's workers' compensation and damage claims.

Each day that there are no injuries, property damage, or broken equipment, a Bingo number is drawn.

Numbers continue to be drawn each day that employees work safely until

someone wins a prize valued at approximately \$200. The game starts over each time an injury, property damage, or broken equipment occurs.

The results have been dramatic. According to Vice-President Colette Gleason, "our workers' comp payments have been reduced by approximately \$15,000 per year, with zero to one compensable claims per year, plus less damage to equipment."

### Incentives to Stop Smoking

**Heritage Landscapes** in San Anselmo, California, established a goal to have its employees (including managers) quit smoking. At its annual holiday party in 2004, the company announced that the spouse or significant other of any employee who stopped smoking for three months would receive \$100 in cash.

The result? One employee quit smoking, and, at last report, had gone 11 months without smoking; another worker had quit for a month to date.

## **Promissory Notes Help Increase Seat Belt Use**

**Bret Achtenhagen's Seasonal Services** in Eagle, Wisconsin, decided that it wanted to achieve 100 percent compliance with its seat belt use policy. At the company's annual safety meeting with its insurance firm, employees were asked to write a promissory note addressed to the company and to their families promising to wear seat belts at all times while in a company truck or a personal vehicle.

The notes were signed and placed into a special file. Employees were spot checked at the company's entrance in the mornings and afternoons, as well as at the gas station where the trucks stop in the morning. "To date, we're seeing about an 80 percent improvement over last year," Bryan Mours reported.

## **Scorecard Reporting Reduces Annual Injury/Incident Rate**

The **Acres Group** in Wauconda, Illinois, uses scorecards to report on accidents and injuries at its monthly facility and tailgate safety meetings. The company established goals, created scorecards, and used PowerPoint presentations to report monthly and year-to-date results.

"This practice has had wide impact because it gets information out to the whole employee population, says Human Resources Vice-President Maureen Scheitz. "It raises awareness, highlights trends, and bumps safety management responsibilities out to the whole group."

In the first three years since implementing the practice, the company reduced its incident volume by 5 to 10 percent each year.

## ***Fanny Packs Increase the Use of Personal Protective Equipment***

How do you reduce accidents related to the lack of personal protective equipment (PPE)? **CoCal Landscape** in Denver, Colorado, decided to "boost company unity" and promote the use of PPE by putting together fanny packs for all employees, according to **CoCal's** Mari Medrano Mejia.

The fanny packs contain the PPE that the company requires at work — gloves, safety goggles, dust masks, hearing protection, and safety vests. "Accidents happen, but the severity of injuries can be reduced significantly if protective gear is worn," says Mejia.

## **Company Reduces Annual Eye Injuries**

**Kujawa Enterprises, Inc., (KEI)** in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, had nine employee eye injuries in 2003 and wanted to reduce them to zero. The following year, the company made eye protection mandatory and *strictly* enforced its use.

"Each employee was issued a pair of clear and a pair of tinted safety glasses," says Vice-President Rick Rollo. "If they are broken or scratched, the company replaces them for nothing; if they are lost, the employee is required to purchase a new pair for four dollars."

Supervisors visiting job sites immediately check for safety equipment. Workers who are not using eye protection, along with the crew chief, are verbally warned. Second offenses receive written warnings; third offenses get a mandatory one day off. The result? Zero eye injuries in 2004!

*Note to STARS members: We encourage you to contact the persons listed for more information on the following effective safety practices.*

### ***Accident-Free Signage***

**Clearwater Landscaping Company** in Sun Valley, Idaho, made accidents a companywide issue and reduced injuries by placing “number of accident-free days” signage in each division. (Lindsay Smith)

### ***After-Hours Safety Training***

**Aspen Environmental Companies, LLC** in Glenwood, New Jersey, increased its bidding confidence by hiring a natural gas company to provide after-hours safety training. (Ron Muller)

### ***Documenting Incidents***

**Dennis’ Seven Dees Landscaping** in Portland, Oregon, reduced incidents by nearly 50 percent after creating employee injury and auto/equipment incident reporting forms. (Scott Cowling)

**Ocean Woods Landscaping** in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, computes lost time incident rates and recordable incident rates by department to improve employee safety. (Scott Slawson)

### ***Driving Accidents***

**Hemlock Landscapes** in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, motivated its crew leaders to take ownership of their driving records via a hands-on truck-trailer driving course and many tailgate meetings. (Jimmy Leffler)

### ***OSHA-Mandated Training***

**Emerald Coast Services** in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida, reported only one OSHA-recordable incident for the year after implementing new industry-specific training. (Teresa Augustin)

**Swingle Tree, Lawn & Christmas Décor** in Denver, Colorado, trained all employees

in OSHA rules and developed an OSHA-compliant checklist. (Shane Vosberg)

### ***Personal Protective Equipment***

**Greener Pastures Landscape** in Dallas, Texas, helped reduce eye injuries by showing employees the damage to safety glasses from thrown rocks. (John Brown)  
**Signature Landscape** in Olathe, Kansas, implemented an effective steel-toed work boot/shoe policy. (Bill Gordon)

### ***Return-to-Work Program***

**The Bruce Company of Wisconsin** reduced injured employees’ days away from work and the payout of workers’ compensation wage benefits by implementing a modified duty/return-to-work program. (Laurie Bishop)

### ***Safe Work Environment***

**Caeser’s Creek Nursery & Landscaping** in Waynesville, Ohio, promotes an overall safer work environment by reinforcing the concept that all employees are “safety officers.” (Chris Hice)

**Singing Hills Landscape** in Aurora, Colorado, reinforces a safe work environment by stressing that its employees are all part of a “family unit.” (Greg Anderson)

**The Groundskeeper** in Tucson, Arizona, reported a 50 percent decline in workers’ compensation claims by taking a number of steps to keep safety in the forefront of employees’ minds. (Janet Batsa)

### ***Safety Bingo***

**Gothic Grounds Management** in Valencia, California, attributes a significant reduction in accidents and incidents and their associated costs to implementation of a daily safety bingo game. (Sarah Lampert)

**Pacific Landscape Management** in Hillsboro, Oregon, has significantly reduced injuries by implementing a safety bingo game. (Elias Godinez)

### ***Safety Checkpoints***

**Suburban Landscape Management** in Wichita, Kansas, instilled employee responsibility in the trucks-trailers that workers operate by setting up a safety checkpoint that drivers must pass through each morning. (Safia Gadelkarim)

### ***Safety Committees***

**Bozzuto Landscaping Company** in Laurel, Maryland, formed a safety committee to oversee and establish safety practices, as well as a new accident review board. (Bob Chartos)

### ***Safety Mentors***

**Dues Nursery and Landscaping, Ltd.**, in Celina, Ohio, assigns each new employee to a seasoned employee for safety training. (Tom Bruggeman)

### ***Safety Supplies***

**James River Grounds Management** in Glen Allen, Virginia, ensured that all vehicles are equipped with the proper safety items by assigning each driver a driver emergency kit. (Maria Candler)

**Lied's** in Sussex, Wisconsin, used "kaizen" techniques to centralize first aid and other safety supplies and place them in accessible, highly visible locations. (Robb Lied)

### ***Safety Videos***

**Hamilton-Steele Outdoor Accents** in Houston, Texas, reported no injuries in the first six months of having workers watch safety videos in Spanish every two weeks. (Becky Steele)

### ***Truck-Trailer Backing and Loading***

**Engledow Group** in Carmel, Indiana, eliminated back injuries from loading equipment onto large trucks by making lift gates standard on all new one-ton and larger trucks. (David George)

**Heaviland Enterprises** in Vista, California, implemented a tie-down procedure to secure loads and help avoid accidents. (Tom Heaviland)

**JLC Landscape Services** in Holtsville, New York, uses brief morning meetings to reinforce proper backing up and truck-trailer connections. (Joseph Cerbone)

**Vande Hey Company** in Appleton, Wisconsin, reduced injuries from jumping on and off trucks while loading and unloading by building racks, ladders, and wider steps. (Jerry Schumacher)

### ***Vehicle Inspection Reports***

**James Martin Associates** in Vernon Hills, Illinois, developed a daily vehicle inspection report form that includes additional items to be checked each payday. (Beth McElroy)

**Turf Specialties** in Midland, Texas, reduced repairs and downtime by creating a detailed weekly truck/trailer/equipment inspection report. (Susan Armendariz)

### ***Weekly Safety Meetings***

These companies reported heightened employee awareness and fewer accidents due to weekly safety meetings: **Butch Neuens Landscaping** in Iron Mountain, Michigan; **D. Foley Landscape** in South Walpole, Massachusetts; **David J. Frank Landscape Contracting** in Germantown, Wisconsin; **Naturescape Texas** in San Antonio, Texas; **Riverside Tree & Landscape Company** in Ashland, Massachusetts; **Starwood of Myrtle Beach** in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina; and **Sunrise Landscape Maintenance** in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

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