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NEW CLASS CONVERSION DATABASE NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

The new class conversion database from 1974 to present is now available online. Because of changes and improvements to the job evaluation system throughout the years and the fundamental role the class structure plays in other human resources processes (for example, determining classes to which employees may be certified for retention and layoff purposes), the need for tracking the history of class changes is very important. The database allows users to search on any class code or class title, past or present, and track the conversion history of that class.

A few years back, DHR released a mini version of this database that showed class history going back to 1990, which was in an Access database form. The new conversion database search tool is now accessible from the Job Evaluation [Web page](#). The conversion database user's guide, also on the Web page, should help answer some basic questions and assist in interpreting search results. If any questions or issues regarding the use of this database or search results should arise, please contact Travis Engelhardt at travis.engelhardt@state.co.us, or 303.866.4252.

OFFERING AGING PARENTS SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE WITH THEIR FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

The average age of a State employee is 46. Many employees are caring for an aging parent as well as their immediate family. Your parent's financial situation may become a key consideration as you continue to care for them. At some point it will become almost inevitable: your parents are going to need your help with money and health issues. If your parents are advancing in age (early 70's or older), it may be a good time to offer a little help and guidance with regards to their financial affairs.

When it comes to discussing personal financial affairs with your parents, financial advisors often suggest that you start slowly and work up to conversations that are more detailed. However, it all depends on your parents. Some may be more open and forthcoming, while others may view sharing this

information as a loss of independence. The important thing is to open up the channels of communication as soon as possible. One or both of your parents could become seriously ill or incapacitated. In addition, seniors may be more susceptible to fraud. And, at some point, your parents may become unable to keep up with their financial affairs as their physical and mental abilities diminish. Waiting until a crisis occurs can cause much heartache and stress (not to mention financial losses!).

Where should you start? Your first move should be a simple heart-to-heart conversation. Explain to them that it will be easier for you to help them later (when they really need it) if they share details about their finances with you now. If your parents are uncomfortable with this, then at the very least they should be willing to tell you where they keep their important financial records and documents (just in case of an emergency). Here's a quick checklist of important information you should know about your parents.

1. Do they have a will? If so, where is it kept?
2. Do they have a living will or medical directives so someone can speak for them should they become incapacitated?
3. Do they have a durable power of attorney so someone can handle their financial affairs if needed?
4. Social Security Numbers.
5. Details of any insurance policies, including health, life and long-term care.
6. Income, including retirement plans, social security, annuities, dividends, etc.
7. Savings and investments, including bank account numbers and names of financial institutions.
8. Tax returns, health records, debts and payments.
9. Location of safe deposit boxes and keys to boxes.
10. Names and phone numbers of legal advisors, doctors, attorneys, insurance agents, accountants, etc.

When it comes to guiding your parents through the many financial and health issues they will face, it is important to keep in mind a few things:

1. Always respect their rights and wishes.
2. Give them as much control as possible.
3. Keep their money separate from yours.
4. Involve them as much as possible.
5. Keep them informed.

If there are other financial topics of interest to you, please provide your suggestions to Suzanne Kubec, DC Plan Administrator, at 303-866-3954 or suzanne.kubec@state.co.us. *The Information provided by Great-West Retirement Services is educational information and should not be interpreted as financial advice.*

FMLA 101: BACK TO BASICS: INSTALLMENT I – NOTIFICATION/DESIGNATION REQUIREMENTS

Administering the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) can be a challenge not only because of regulatory requirements, but it also requires coordination with other employment laws and leave policies. So, what's an employer to do? The next several issues of the FMLA Corner will focus on getting back to the basics of FMLA. What is fact and what is fiction when it comes to employer and employee responsibilities? For this first installment, let's discuss notification requirements and when to designate FMLA. We invite you to share this series of articles with your supervisors and managers.

Federal law mandates that eligible employees be granted unpaid leave to tend to various absences for a serious health condition either for the employee or an employee's child, spouse, or parent. The state

personnel system grants employees up to 13 weeks (520 hours) of unpaid leave every fiscal year. This leave runs concurrently with all forms of leave, except for those employees in “make whole” due to a workers’ compensation injury. FMLA is not about pay but rather job protection. When an eligible employee requests leave for a qualifying condition, the employer cannot waive or refuse to designate FMLA. Also, the employer cannot arbitrarily decide the amount of leave nor require more time, contrary to a legitimate certification. On the other hand, an employee cannot waive or refuse designation.

Under the FMLA, the employer includes any person who acts directly or indirectly on behalf of an employer’s interest. For the State, this is any person authorized to act on the leave request, e.g., managers or supervisors approving leave.

Employer requirements

When leave is requested, the employer must obtain enough information regarding the reason for the leave to designate whether it is FML. Once an employer has acquired knowledge of the reason for leave, it has two business days (absent extenuating circumstance) to designate whether the absence qualifies, and to notify the employee of a FML designation and the employee’s rights. The type of leave will depend on the individual circumstances. For example, if the employee were requesting leave to tend to the serious health condition of a parent s/he would use accrued sick leave first. On the other hand, if a new father were in need of leave to bond with his newly born baby, annual leave would be granted.

Employers must provide notice to employees of the requirement to complete the medical certification form (State of Colorado Medical Certificate) and the period in which to complete the form, specifically, 15 calendar days. In addition, the employee must be notified of the consequences for not completing the form, e.g., leave could be denied. If the employee does not deliver the completed form within the original requested period the employer must afford the employee a reasonable opportunity to complete the required documentation. The second notice needs to include the due date and reiterate the consequences for failure to provide the certification in a timely manner, up to and including termination. Based on case law, it is recommended that another 15 days be granted. If the employee never turns in the required forms, the leave is not FML.

Appointing authorities and HR professionals need to educate employees on the benefits and requirements of the FMLA. In addition, it is critical that appointing authorities and HR professionals communicate and work collaboratively on managing individual cases.

Employee requirements

Employees are to provide written notice to their appointing authority of the need for leave 30 days in advance when foreseeable. If unforeseeable, the notice is to be given “as soon as practical.” “As soon as practical” means within two business days of being aware of the need for leave. Employees cannot interfere with the employers’ requirement to properly designate. So, they are obligated to provide sufficient information on the reason for the leave. If an employee is incapable of providing notice, a responsible party such as a family member should do so. For example, an employee is in an accident and is admitted to the hospital with significant injuries and a concussion. The employee is not fully aware of what occurred, so if the employee is unable, a family member may act on behalf of the employee and contact the employer. Failure to provide such notice could result in the delay of an employee’s FML.

For medically necessary intermittent leave, employees are required to work out a mutually agreed upon schedule for medical treatments with the appointing authority. In addition, employees have the

responsibility for following established check-in schedules while out on leave and updating appointing authorities on any change in their situation.

As you can see, employees and employers have shared responsibilities in the FML process that begin with the need for leave. Failure on either party to follow through on requirements can create unnecessary complications, delays, and additional work.

Next installment: FMLA, Performance, and Disciplinary Action

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS IN 2007 — IT'S TIME TO TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

Great news! You have the ability to contribute up to \$15,500 in your retirement savings plan in 2007. Impossible? You might think so depending upon your income and expenses — but it is critically important that you save as much as you can while the tax law allows it.

The Economic Growth & Tax Relief Reconciliation Act (EGTRRA) of 2001 created a number of opportunities to save more. One of the reasons behind EGTRRA is that most of us have greatly underestimated how much money we will need for retirement.

How much retirement income do you need?

In general, we may need 70-90% of our current income for each year of retirement. Sound like a lot? We may need even more depending upon how long we want to be retired and the lifestyle we want to create for ourselves. Will you have enough retirement savings to be retired for 10 or 20 years?

How long will your savings last?

Let's take a look at some examples of account balances during retirement, assuming a hypothetical 8% annual compounded rate of return and regular monthly withdrawals. *

Retirement Plan Account Balance

Monthly Withdrawals

<u>At Retirement</u>	<u>During Retirement</u>	<u>Years until Depleted</u>
\$50,000	\$1,000	5.09
\$100,000	\$1,000	13.78

Find Ways to Contribute More in 2007

Remember the tax advantages you are receiving by saving "before tax." For instance, if you are in a 27% tax bracket and are contributing \$500 per month in your retirement savings plan, the tax savings is \$135 a month if contributing pre-tax. Also, for public employees, pre-tax savings to supplemental retirement plans do not affect your Highest Average Salary (HAS) calculation for your monthly pension in PERA's Defined Benefit Plan.

Budget now — at the beginning of the year — to maximize your savings power. Break it down and create monthly savings goals. For example, to contribute the maximum amount of \$15,500 in 2007, you will need to contribute approximately \$1,291 per month, however, adjust your amount according to your budget and remember that even a small amount saved each month helps you in retirement.

Review Your Budget ... and Benefit from EGTRRA

Make your financial resolutions now. Start with a review of your spending and savings habits and find a way to save just a little more in 2007.

Call your plan representative at the State of Colorado Service Center, 1-800-838-0457, option #2, and maximize your plan today!

What Are Your 2007 Savings Resolutions?

Take time out to see how you can make the most of your retirement savings plan:

- Add an extra \$5,000 contribution if you are at least 50 years old
- Look into catch-up three years prior to the year you retire
- Your plan may allow you to move IRAs, 401(k) and other retirement plans into this plan to make saving more convenient

*Source: Williamson Group, Inc. For illustrative purposes only. Not intended to represent the actual performance of any particular investment. Does not reflect applicable fees; if such fees were deducted, the accumulation above would be reduced. Assumes an 8% annual return compounded annually. Withdrawals from retirement savings plans are typically taxed as ordinary income and, if taken prior to age 59 ½, may be subject to an additional Federal tax penalty.

Workforce Planning

PDC IS MAKING GREAT STRIDES IN EMPLOYEE TRAINING

The Professional Development Center (PDC) in the Division of Human Resources has undergone significant changes in the past few months. It started with hiring David Remson as the new Administrator of the State training program.

PDC is building on the previous training curriculum with some opportunities that include a series of leadership and business process workshops presented by subject matter experts in the field. The PDC Web page is undergoing a re-design in order to make it more user-friendly and current. Also, notice our new logo that will mark professional development communications.

Our goals for PDC include increased visibility and accessibility to the training program; building a statewide collaborative network of training professionals; and designing, procuring, and delivering training that supports organizational goals. To that end, you may be seeing communication that is more frequent from the PDC. Your help in distributing training information to employees is crucial to our success. Feedback and ideas for outreach, curriculum and training needs are also much appreciated.

PDC will continue to charge tuition for our classes in order to meet our operational cost obligations and bring the best in training to State employees. We can work with agencies and individuals who are finding this to be a barrier. We see the tuition we charge as a reinvestment in meeting training needs on an individual and organizational level. Our over-arching goal is to be instrumental in cultivating a skilled, prepared and engaged workforce, and your partnership in making that happen is an essential element. We rely on the vast institutional knowledge available through the Human Resources Directors Forum in order to build the best training program and partner effectively in doing so. Please call David with any thoughts about how best to serve in this process. You can reach him at 303-866-4265.



EMPLOYEE RETENTION: A BUSINESS IMPERATIVE

According to the 05-06 State of Colorado Workforce report, nearly one third of State employees are eligible to retire in the next 5 years. In some state agencies that number climbs to nearly 70%. Most of these impending retirements represent members of the Baby Boom generation, the largest generational cohort in our Nation's history. The potential impact includes workforce shortages and the

loss of institutional knowledge. As a result, retention of key employees has become a critical element for meeting the challenge of building and sustaining a productive, skilled, and prepared workforce.

In a recent Price Waterhouse Cooper survey of trendsetter businesses, 78% of the respondents indicated that employee retention is the most critical factor for future success, and that creating a retention culture is a business imperative. Employee retention is not about holding people back. It is about actively seeking to create a workplace where employees believe they have a stake in the outcomes and participate in decision-making. Additional essential elements of a retention culture include a workplace environment that supports inclusion, opportunities to learn and grow, and leveraging diversity to achieve organizational goals. Every state agency can benefit from understanding and applying the skill sets attached to implementing retention strategies.

Over the next several months, the Professional Development Center will be rolling out a number of new training opportunities that offer skills building related to workplace culture. Two current offerings are Respect in the Workplace and Thriving in the Multi-Generational Workplace. Both will help any employee build and implement skills that support an efficient, productive, and satisfying workplace for everyone. You can learn more and register for these classes by visiting the Professional Development Center at colorado.gov/dpa/dhr/train/.

Business Risk and Loss Control

YOUR EAP AS A STATE RISK MANAGEMENT TOOL

Jon Richard, PsyD



Risk management in the work setting is typically most strongly associated with programs and practices designed to minimize financial losses caused by accidents and injuries, legal liability exposures, ergonomic problems, and theft or sabotage. However, there is growing attention in the American workplace, both public-sector and private, to *behavioral risk management*. This article seeks to offer core information on behavioral risk management, using the integration of the Colorado State Employee Assistance Program into the Risk Management Unit of the Division of Human Resources as an example.

The classic definition of behavioral risk management comes from Yandrick (1996): “*Behavioral Risk Management applies to the risk connected with workplace behaviors of employees and work organizations that have a negative impact on the productivity of an organization; and life-style behaviors that lead to preventable healthcare conditions and the cost of treating those conditions.*” Consistent with that definition, EAP services seek to improve not only the subjective well-being and contentment of the individual employee, but in doing so, to mitigate financial and behavioral risks to the work unit, division, department and State. For example, consultation services are provided to assist supervisors and managers in responding effectively to problematic employee or workgroup behaviors. The intent is to reduce the number of conflicts and communication problems that metastasize into chronic, productivity-draining dramas or expensive personnel or legal actions. Urgent interventions are provided to a workgroup that has been traumatized by death, injury, or threatening behaviors in order to support the effective coping of each employee *and* to reduce the likelihood that employees will utilize maladaptive and costly coping styles (e.g., excess sick leave, inappropriate alcohol use, on-the-job disengagement (“presenteeism”). Management coaching is provided to assist managers in reducing the risk of unskillful interactions with subordinates that increase the likelihood

of litigation. Direct and confidential counseling services assist employees in coping effectively with a range of life challenges that might otherwise lead to temporary, or in some cases, chronic decline in work performance.

Consider, for example, just two common counseling scenarios:

1. The employee with a recent diagnosis of diabetes, struggling to master the management of this life-changing illness. On average, persons with diabetes lose over 8 days of work per year to the illness, and in 1997, a total of 75,000 workers were totally disabled because of the disease, and \$98 billion in total medical expenditures were attributable to the disease. (American Diabetes Association). Effective diabetes management reduces the risks of blindness, kidney failure, limb amputation, heart disease, and stroke, all of which, if not forestalled, cause enormous health care expenditures, significant absenteeism, and partial or total disability in the worker. Counseling services provided to the individual worker in this situation are aimed not only at improving his or her well-being, health, and quality of life, but at reducing those potential organizational burdens of absenteeism, increasing health care costs (and their effect on insurance rates), and premature turnover due to disability.
2. The employee with mood disorder, such as Depression. Individuals with untreated depression are more than four times as likely as those who are treated to suffer heart disease, and typically utilize twice as many visits to primary care physicians (NIMH), with all the associated costs of absenteeism, direct medical expenditure, and incremental impact on climbing insurance rates. Additionally, employees with unrecognized or inadequately-treated depression demonstrate 20% lower productivity than the average employee, and the aggregate costs of the illness is estimated at \$80 billion per year in the U.S. (Office of the Surgeon General). Thus, the counseling services provided to the employee with depression are meant to reduce his suffering and improve his quality of life, and equally, to reduce the likelihood of organizational losses caused by excess absenteeism, medical expenditure, and reduced productivity.

There is sometimes a mistaken tendency in our culture to draw a distinction between those processes which support individual and group well-being, and those which impact the bottom-lines of productivity and costs. But in fact, as described above, they are inextricably intertwined, and the integration of your Colorado State Employee Assistance Program within State Risk Management exemplifies this dual and complimentary mission. For more information on C-SEAP services or on the topic of behavioral risk management, please contact C-SEAP at 303-866-4314.

RISK MANAGEMENT FULLY STAFFED

The Office of Risk Management has two new faces, Joel Hirshboeck, Program Supervisor for the risk management program and Melody West, Safety & Loss Control Specialist. Both Joel and Melody have many years of risk management experience and their skills make the risk management department even stronger.

Joel brings 23 years of both public and private sector risk management experience to the State of Colorado. Over the past 13 years, he has held a succession of risk management positions with the City and County of Denver, Denver General Hospital, Denver International Airport, and most recently as the Risk Administrator for the City of Denver. In addition to City operation insurance programs, Joel has managed insurance for many large construction projects, including the Denver Art Museum, the Ellie Caulkins Opera House, the Colorado Convention Center and Hotel, and the Wellington E. Webb building. Before those positions, Joel worked in the private insurance industry in claims, loss prevention, safety, field underwriting and as a commercial insurance broker/producer.

Melody has also been in public and private sector risk management for 17 years and has worked at the City of Lakewood, Vicorp Restaurants, the University of Denver and for the past seven years at Pinnacol Assurance. She will be managing the workers' comp program for the state. As such, she will be working with the various agencies, as well as Pinnacol Assurance, to help reduce the state's injuries and claims costs.

Joel and Melody plan to visit locations throughout the state to get to know the nuances of each agency. You can reach Joel at 303-866-4277 or joel.hirschboeck@state.co.us or Melody at 303-866-4294 at melody.west@state.co.us.

General Announcements

TRAINING HIGHLIGHT:

"Managing the Absent Worker" training incorporates discussions and case studies surrounding the challenges with Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Workers' Compensation, Short-Term Disability leave, and injury leave. To register go to colorado.gov/dpa/dhr/train/index.htm.

Oversight of the State Selection system is now administered by DHR's Consulting Services Unit. HR staff may direct their selection-related questions, including those related to Selection PCP, to Jennifer Clayman at 303 866-4248 or jennifer.clayman@state.co.us.

Interested in having ergonomic evaluations done before the end of the fiscal year? Call now to schedule an appointment! Calendar space is limited and evaluations will be scheduled on a first come, first-served basis. Normal claim related requests will continue to be scheduled. Please call either Duane Whitfield at 303 866-4971 or Brenda Hardwick at 303 866-4292.