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RISK MANAGEMENT REVIEW // SUMMER 2025

PREPARING FOR THE WORST

NATURAL DISASTERS AND YOUR CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE



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Colorado Special Districts
Property and Liability Pool



Administered by McGriff, a Marsh & McLennan Agency LLC Company
PO Box 1539, Portland, Oregon 97207
800-318-8870 | csdpool.org

Program Administration

JOE DEPAEPE **CPCU CIC**
jdepaepe@mcgriff.com

JENNIFFER J. ALVARADO
jalvarado@mcgriff.com

P&L Operations Director

ANA HOLDREN **CIC CRM**
aholdren@mcgriff.com

Strategic Risk Programs Advisor

LEI SHI **CRM AU CIC**
lshi@mcgriff.com

Sr. Account Manager

MICHAEL BRANTNER
michael.brantner@mcgriff.com

Member Representatives

QUYNH DAVIDSON
quynh.davidson@mcgriff.com

JESSE HIMMELSBACH
jesse.himmelsbach@mcgriff.com

APRIL INDALECIO
april.indalecio@mcgriff.com

JUAN LACAYO
juan.lacayo@mcgriff.com

YUKE LI
yuke.li@mcgriff.com

ELLE TESLIK
elle.teslik@mcgriff.com

CHEYENNE WHEELER **CISR**
cheyenne.wheeler@mcgriff.com

Communications & Programs

MAKENZIE KELLAR
makenzie.kellar@mcgriff.com

ALEX TERLECKY
aterlecky@mcgriff.com

Safety & Loss Prevention

KINSEY BAILEY-BARKLEY
kinsey.bailey-barkley@mcgriff.com

KYLE BROWN

kyle.brown@mcgriff.com

BRENNAN MENDUS
bmendus@mcgriff.com

Member Engagement Coordinator

CHÉRE PHILLIPS
cphillips@mcgriff.com

Claims Advocacy Manager

PAULA LOWDER **AIC**
paula.lowder@mcgriff.com

P&L Claims Team Lead

CINDY TUCKER
cynthia.tucker@sedgwick.com

WC Claims Team Lead

JESSICA EDWARDS
jessica.edwards@sedgwick.com

Property and Liability Claims

KIMBERLY PEKAR
kimberly.pekar@sedgwick.com

BRIAN BONNOT

brian.bonnet@sedgwick.com

KEVIN SMALL

kevin.small@sedgwick.com

Workers' Compensation Claims

MICHAEL HAWKINS
michael.hawkins@sedgwick.com

HILLARY KEYES

hillary.keyes@sedgwick.com

PATTY STEWART

ana.stewart@sedgwick.com

Board of Directors

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Fountain Sanitation District

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While we make every effort to ensure that this information is as accurate and timely as possible, readers should consult their broker, agent, or other professional before making any decisions regarding their individual situation.



SUMMER 2025

ON THE COVER:

Preparing for the Worst: Natural Disasters & Critical Infrastructure

Summer means storm season is here! This article will break down what critical infrastructure is, what sorts of extreme weather Colorado tends to encounter, and how you can set your organization up for success regardless of the forecast. **Page 8**

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LOVE IS BLIND...SO IS HIRING

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WHEN A LIFEGUARD IS NECESSARY

Deciding when a lifeguard is needed and how to hire one can make or break your summer. **Page 14**

SAFETY HERO: PUEBLO WEST METRO

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MITIGATING THE LARGEST SAFETY HAZARD: HUMANS

Addressing these common factors could make the difference in your organization's safety. **Page 18**



WHAT'S HAPPENING

Stay updated on all things Special Districts
csdpool.org

Water and Wastewater Certification Now Available



Water and wastewater operators in need of training units to complete certification can now access our online training platform for training units (TUs) that are sent directly to Colorado Certified Water Professionals.

This system is easy to use, easy to access, and completely free to members and their employees. It is also the home of our Training Credit program, making this an essential companion for all water and sanitation districts.

This system will also allow you and your operators to track their TUs with both inside and outside training. That makes maintaining certifications even easier.

Also, sign up for live webinars where support and training personnel hold in-depth webinars on a regular basis to familiarize you with the platform.

The Training Center offers TUs that apply to the following credentials:

- Water Treatment Class A, B, C, S, D, T
- Wastewater Treatment Class A, B, C, S, D, T
- Collection System Operator Class 1 – 4
- Distribution System Operator Class 1 – 4
- Industrial System Operator Class 1, A – T
- Industrial System Operator Class 2, A – T

Getting Started

Create an account by scanning the QR code below or visit targetsolutions.com/csd. Once your account is active, log in and click on “My Credentials.” Then, select the credential you want, add in your own start and expiration date, and click save.

Supervisors can add credentials by navigating to the “Manage Users” tab, selecting the user, and then clicking the “Credentials” button to “Add Credential.”

Once you assign yourself a credential, you will need to complete it ahead of the expiration date and take any applicable exam, before clicking submit to ensure the process is completed.

This program is available to CSD Pool Members at no cost.



**Scan to
start training!**

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Renewal Ramp-up Webinar Airs Aug. 19



Annual renewals can be a lot of work and take time away from your usual day-to-day activities. This year we hope to make things easier by walking you through the process step-by-step during our annual webinar.

This webinar will teach you about:

- How to calculate your operating expenses based on your budget and what details to review with your board.
- How to navigate the website and provide tips for if you get stuck.
- Accessing the Renewal Information Hub.
- How to avoid surcharges and what discounts may be available to your district.
- Who to contact depending on your question.
- Additional questions from attendees.

Please note that this webinar is specific to navigating the website and making updates for the renewal. We will also be recording this webinar, so even if you can't attend, be sure to sign up to receive a recording.

Be the envy of all your special district peers with your ability to finish renewal before Halloween!

Webinar Details

Presented by: CSD Pool Team's Property and Liability Underwriter Michael Brantner and Workers' Compensation Underwriter, Juan Lacayo.

Date: August 19

Time: 10:00 am - 11:00 am

Website: csdpool.org/events



Register today!

Annual CSD Pool Membership Meeting Set for Sept. 17



Join us in Keystone, CO for our Annual Membership Meeting. This meeting will be held in conjunction with the SDA Conference, which can be attended in-person or virtually.

This is a public meeting, so if you only plan to attend this meeting in-person, you do not need to register for the SDA Conference. If you plan on attending any other session, visit vendors, or access the conference or Membership Meeting via the virtual livestream, you must register at sdaco.org.

2025 SDA Conference

The Special Districts Association of Colorado will be celebrating their 50th year jubilee at the 2025 Annual Conference from September 16th through September 18th.

Registration is now open and the total cost is \$415 and includes all eight meals and events. The full program will be available in mid-August and posted on sdaco.org.

If you would like to register as an in-person or virtual attendee, make lodging reservations, or apply as a sponsor, scan the QR code.

CSD Pool Membership Meeting Details

Date: September 17

Time: 3:15 pm

Where: Castle Peak Room (2nd Floor) at the SDA Conference in Keystone, CO

SDA Annual Conference Details

Date: September 16-18

Where: 633 Tennis Club Road, Keystone, CO 80435



Register today!

UPCOMING EVENTS

CSD Pool Webinar Series

Sign up for any of our webinars by scanning the QR code. All webinars are free to attend and take place at 10 am MT.

To view our entire calendar of events and webinars, visit csdpool.org/events.



JULY 21

HR SERIES: Organizing and Prioritizing for Professional Success

Antoinette Joy // CPS HR Consulting

Explore strategies for managing multiple priorities to ensure you remain productive in attaining your personal and professional goals.

AUGUST 19

2026 Renewal Ramp-Up and Q&A

Colorado Special Districts Pool

Renewal is a lot of work and takes time away from your real job. This year we hope to make things easier by walking you through the process step by step.

OCTOBER 14

Interviewing Tactics: Putting Your Organization's Best Foot Forward

Brian Haggerty // CPS HR Consulting

How you communicate about your organization can make all of the difference in landing your next employee.

NOVEMBER 18

Lessons Learned from Fatalities and Major Accidents

Kyle Brown // Colorado Special Districts Pool

Though workplace accidents are a grim subject, learning more about the before, during, and after of these cases can help you make sure your employees return home.

DECEMBER 16

Job Analysis: Crafting Job Descriptions that Pop!

Geoff Burcaw // CPS HR Consulting

Learn the essential elements of a job description and how to gather that information through job analysis.

Outdoor Risks that Ruin the Fun

by Charmaine Skoubo

As summer kicks into gear, the time for outdoor events is upon us. From community parades to dog park grand openings, to new playgrounds, Colorado's special districts are known for creative outdoor events. A lot goes into planning an outdoor event to make it as smooth and as fun as possible for guests, but while they build community spirit, they also introduce unique risks. With elements like human hamster balls, bounce houses, and dog-friendly events, they can pose surprising coverage challenges.

Risk Management Action

These activities all sound like a lot of fun, but it's important special districts are careful and manage the risk when it comes to these outdoor events. If you're unsure what steps to take when planning for an outdoor event, follow these best practices:

- Require COIs (certificate of insurance) from every vendor or performer prior to the date of the event
- Use waivers for high-risk activities
- Conduct pre-event walkthroughs to identify unusual hazards
- Maintain detailed event logs, even for informal or recurring events
- Train staff and volunteers on emergency protocols for each event type
- Review General Liability coverage to include the correct number of district sponsored events and/or fundraisers, especially if those events involve alcohol.

In addition to these Liability considerations, districts should thoroughly review their safety protocols and procedures. A common best practice ahead of an outdoor event is to complete a risk assessment for each activity. First, research similar activities and events to see what others have had issues with at their events. Then focus on your on site-specific activities at your own district, asking:

- What are the potential hazards
- What are we currently doing to reduce those hazards
- What additional steps can we take to reduce risk

Creative outdoor events are a hallmark for many of Colorado's special districts and so is responsible risk management. While fun and unusual activities make events extra special, they also warrant a closer look at coverage, vendor agreements, and safety planning.

If a district is ever in doubt about the safety of their event or their coverage, contact us at safety@cspdpool.org.

Parades and Community Walks



Risks

- Vehicle malfunction on a float leading to injury.
- Candy tossing or water squirting injuries (yes, it can happen, especially to small children).
- Spectator interactions, like stepping onto the parade route.

Risk Management Action:

- Ensure proper event permits, create barriers or roped-off areas, and confirm that float operators are licensed and insured.

Playgrounds



Risks

- Overcrowding, unsupervised use, and food and trash hazards.
- Lack of signage or routine maintenance.

Risk Management Action:

- Perform a yearly inspection by a CPSI.
- Provide age ranges for acceptable use and signage with regulations.

Bounce Houses and Inflatables



Risks

- Wind-lift, structural failure & undetected damage.
- Slippery surfaces.

Risk Management Action:

- Require third-party vendors to provide proof of inflatable-specific liability insurance, including naming the district as an additional insured.
- Have strict wind and weight policies in place.
- Require workers' compensation if the vendor is providing an employee to supervise.

Dog Parks and Pet-Friendly Events



Risks

- Dog fights causing injury to people or pets.
- Unleashed animals wandering into traffic or vendor booths.
- Disease transmission from shared water or waste areas (for example, giardia or parvovirus).

Risk Management Action:

- Verify coverage addresses animal liability.
- Implement signage about owner responsibility and offer designated "safe zones" or leashing areas.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



South Fort Collins Sanitation is Hands-On With Safety

Empowering employees and supporting managers proved to be a winning formula.

CATEGORY:
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

TAGS:
RISK MANAGEMENT
SAFETY

AUDIENCE:
RISK MANAGERS
SAFETY COORDINATORS



by Charmaine Skoubo

At South Fort Collins Sanitation District (SFCSD), safety isn't just a checklist, it's a deeply rooted part of the organizational culture. What began as a compliance-driven approach has transformed into a proactive, employee-led safety model focused on transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. From hands-on training and real-time reporting tools to visible leadership engagement and a dedicated Safety Committee, SFCSD sets a high standard for what it means to prioritize safety in every aspect of operations.

The first major step in strengthening their safety culture was the formation of an employee-led Safety Committee, an initiative that brought safety discussions directly to the people most affected by them.

"The committee meets monthly to review safety observations, near misses, and upcoming training topics," says Derik Caudill, Regulatory Compliance and Collection System Manager at SFCSD. "Every meeting concludes with a facility walkthrough, where committee members identify and document safety issues in real time using a mobile app. These observations are logged, reviewed, and assigned to the appropriate manager for resolution—ensuring nothing falls

through the cracks."

By empowering frontline staff to lead these efforts, the district has created a system of ownership and accountability that extends across departments. Employees now have a formal, respected avenue for sharing safety concerns—and the tools in place to ensure their voices are heard and acted upon.

Keeping monthly safety trainings fresh, engaging, and practical is another cornerstone of SFCSD's culture. Rather than relying on passive lectures or slide decks, the district brings safety to life through dynamic, hands-on sessions that reflect the real challenges staff face in the field.

"Hands-on exercises and scenario-based discussions are regular features," Derik explains. "We also rotate presenters, use real equipment in demonstrations, and keep sessions short and specific."

This approach not only increases retention but keeps staff actively participating in their own safety education. Relevance is key, and SFCSD makes it a priority to tailor content to what employees are actually experiencing on the job.

"We regularly ask staff what they're struggling with or would like more information about. This has led to focused trainings on topics like electrical safety, overhead rigging,

and confined space entry, topics that are both timely and relevant to our work environment.”

While many organizations emphasize the importance of leadership in safety, SFCSD sets itself apart by making leadership visibility and involvement a consistent reality.

“Our leadership team is committed to cultivating a culture where safety is both modeled and supported at every level,” says Derik. “Senior staff regularly participate in safety meetings, trainings, and walkthroughs. Not just to show support, but to stay engaged in the realities our field crews and plant operators face.”

This hands-on leadership reinforces the idea that safety is not just a compliance issue, but a shared value that applies equally to everyone, from executives to operators. When employees see leadership taking safety seriously, they’re more likely to follow suit.

Equally important is SFCSD’s open-feedback and accountability system, which ensures that employee observations aren’t just filed away, they’re acted on.

“When safety observations are submitted by employees, they’re not only discussed in committee, but also sent directly to department managers, tracked for resolution, and revisited to ensure follow-through,” Derik adds. “This level of transparency shows staff that their input matters and builds trust across teams.”

The culture of safety extends all the way to the top. The district’s Board of Directors plays a crucial role in supporting and funding safety

initiatives, consistently recommending and approving expenditures not only for equipment and training but also for employee engagement in the program. This top-down and bottom-up alignment reinforces safety as a true organizational priority.

For other sanitation districts looking to create or revitalize a culture of safety, SFCSD offers clear and actionable advice: start with leadership and build with your people.

“Start by empowering your employees and ensuring your senior managers are fully supportive of the approach,” Derik advises. “Without engaged management and leadership, it’s hard for staff to take safety seriously. Ultimately, managers shape the safety culture.”

Once that leadership is in place, it’s critical to give employees the tools and support they need to succeed.

“Give employees the tools, training, and support to actively participate in the safety process, and then act on what they tell you. Build a structure that encourages open dialogue, follows through on concerns, and recognizes good safety behavior.”

He adds that effective systems don’t have to be complex—but they do have to be consistent.

“Implement simple systems for tracking safety issues and ensure leadership is actively involved in both addressing and modeling safe practices. And finally, treat safety as a continual process. Culture doesn’t shift overnight, but with consistency and collaboration, it becomes part of

how your organization operates every day.”

Looking ahead, South Fort Collins Sanitation District is continuing to raise the bar with new tools and training initiatives designed to enhance both safety and professional development.

“We’re currently developing a full training series tied to our Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), which will be eligible for continuing education units (CEUs) through the Colorado Certified Water Professional (CCWP) program,” Derik shares. “These trainings will cover field operations, PPE, and more.”

In addition, the district is expanding its use of mobile technology to capture and respond to safety concerns in real time.

“All staff have access to a mobile app that allows them to log safety observations with comments and photos. These entries are emailed in real-time to the Safety Committee and stored on a dashboard we review monthly. By expanding how we analyze and act on this data, we’re working toward a more predictive and preventative safety model.”

With a strong foundation of employee involvement, leadership support, and a commitment to ongoing improvement, South Fort Collins Sanitation District continues to lead by example. Their evolving safety program not only protects staff and infrastructure but also reinforces a culture where every team member feels heard, empowered, and responsible for maintaining a safe workplace.



TAKE YOUR SAFETY PROGRAM TO THE **NEXT LEVEL**

Facility and playground inspections
Safety manual buildouts
Safety committee support
Onsite trainings

csdpool.org/connect

PREPARING FOR THE WORST

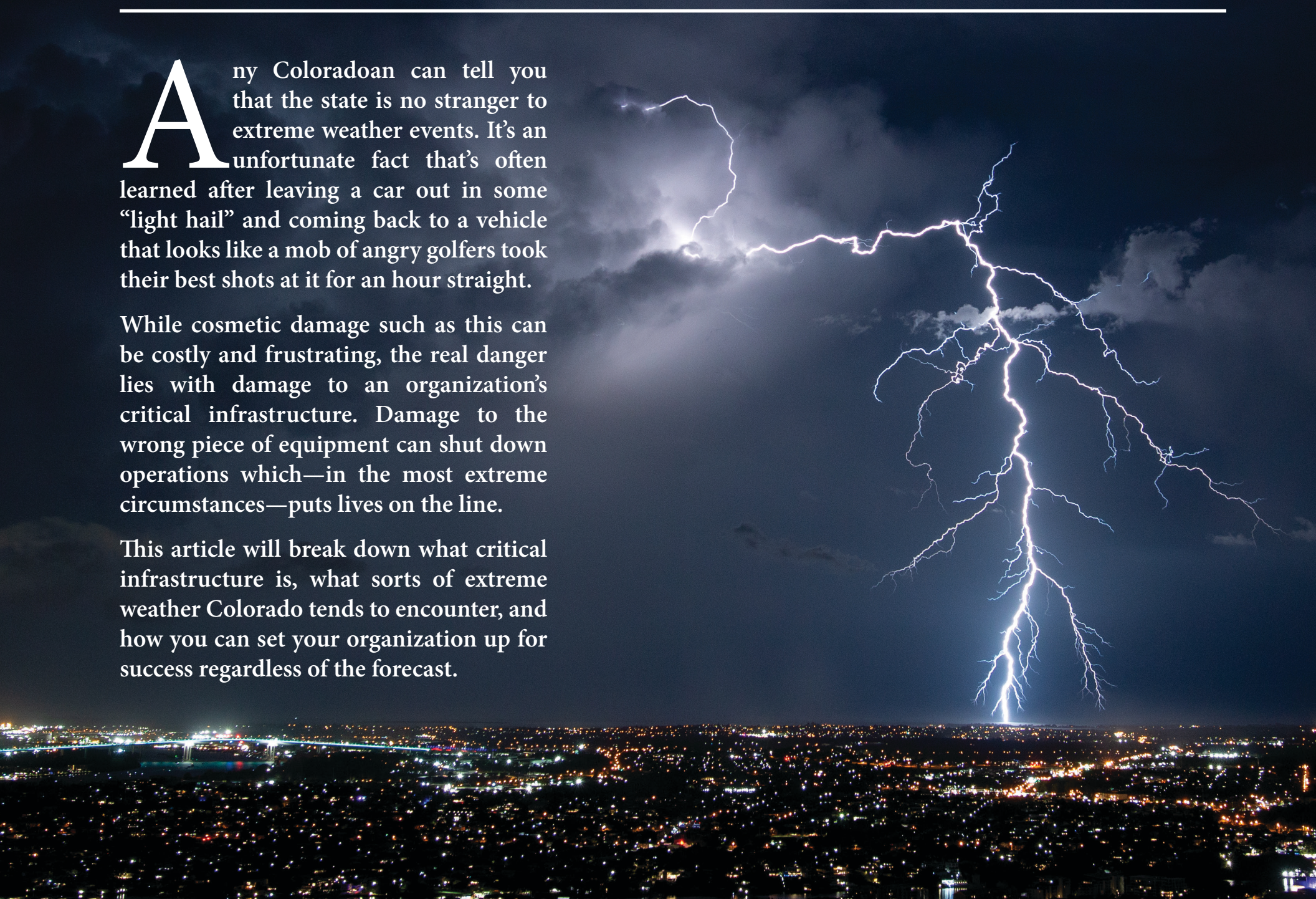
NATURAL DISASTERS AND YOUR CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

by Makenzie Kellar

Any Coloradoan can tell you that the state is no stranger to extreme weather events. It's an unfortunate fact that's often learned after leaving a car out in some "light hail" and coming back to a vehicle that looks like a mob of angry golfers took their best shots at it for an hour straight.

While cosmetic damage such as this can be costly and frustrating, the real danger lies with damage to an organization's critical infrastructure. Damage to the wrong piece of equipment can shut down operations which—in the most extreme circumstances—puts lives on the line.

This article will break down what critical infrastructure is, what sorts of extreme weather Colorado tends to encounter, and how you can set your organization up for success regardless of the forecast.



What is Critical Infrastructure?

For the purposes of this article, critical infrastructure is meant to refer to an organization's property and assets—whether physical or virtual—that are essential to the functioning of the organization and can cause damage to the organization's security, financial health, or employee and public safety if compromised.

¹The wordiness of this definition may make the concept seem complicated, but it's easy enough to recognize in practice. Say, for example, the organization's printer gets jammed. It will likely be inconvenient for those who need to use it, but employees and the organization as a whole should be able to operate normally until it is fixed. Additionally, unless some unique modifications have been made to it, a non-functioning printer certainly wouldn't be considered a safety hazard.

But what if a water filter stops working at a water and sanitation district? What if your organization provides emergency services and the phone lines go down? The impact of these problems would be felt immediately, and there is a very real chance of people being hurt if the issue is not resolved quickly.

It is these assets that are considered critical infrastructure. Although, it is worth remembering that what exactly is considered "critical" may vary between organizations, and different assets are affected by each type of disaster in unique ways.

Extreme Weather and Natural Disasters

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) released a report of "Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters" which tracked climate events from 1980 to 2024 that had "great economic and societal impacts."²

Since their data takes into account physical damage to buildings, electronic infrastructure, vehicles, and public assets among others, it provides a decent measure of which events likely resulted in the loss of critical infrastructure.

Using the data they provided from Colorado, we've broken down what types of extreme weather and natural disasters produce the highest risk for organizations based on how many times the hazard appeared in NOAA's report:

¹ <https://www.cisa.gov/topics/critical-infrastructure-security-and-resilience/critical-infrastructure-sectors>

² <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/billions/>

Freeze

With one event listed in the report, damage from freezes make up only 0.2% of the total costs of disasters NOAA included. While there were at least 100 casualties from this event across the U.S., the damage to physical assets was mostly confined to agriculture.

On top of that, the single event that made the cut took place in December of 1983. While it's important to consider the impact of all possible disasters, this one probably shouldn't be a top priority.

Flooding

Flooding is slightly more of a concern with two instances making the cut from 2013 and 2015. The 2013 incident is most notable as a record amount of rainfall caused widespread destruction in Colorado across multiple cities and towns, costing the state about \$2 billion.

The NOAA report emphasized that these instances of flooding were particularly devastating to infrastructure. This shouldn't come as a surprise, since flooding often results in damage to foundations, walls, ceilings, roads, bridges, and can even disrupt phone and cable lines.

Despite only making up 2.6% of the catastrophic events for Colorado in the report, it resulted in 4.1% of the total cost of damages.³

While this may not seem like a lot, winter storms (the next weather event on the list that we'll discuss) had three occurrences and only accounted for 0.8% of the total cost of damages.

Winter Storm

While cold weather is certainly not new to the state of Colorado, high-cost winter storms are more recent occurrences.

Only three instances are included in the report, but all of them have occurred within the last five years (2021, 2022, and 2024 if you want specifics). High winds and freezing rain caused damage to businesses and vehicles while frozen water pipes helped drive up the costs.

Wildfire

Jumping up to 12 events, wildfires were reported to

³ <https://www.ncesc.com/geographic-faq/what-water-damage-is-caused-by-flooding/>

have cost anywhere from \$5 billion to \$10 billion in damages during the timeframe NOAA studied. Structural damage was listed as one of the major causes of loss with burnt homes being a large part of that category. Air quality was also a concern for areas affected by the fires and residents were typically warned to stay inside.

As such, any outdoor infrastructure that requires regular maintenance—even if it isn't directly in the way of a fire—may need to have protocols in place for how it can be maintained when getting outside isn't feasible for employees.

Drought

Despite having the second highest number of events on the list for Colorado, droughts may not initially seem like a major threat—at least where infrastructure is concerned.

The industries that tend to be impacted most heavily by droughts include agriculture and livestock, which special organizations generally don't have a stake in. However, the low water levels brought about by droughts can cause sinkholes and throw a wrench in hydroelectric power systems.

Droughts are also often accompanied by extremely hot weather which can damage asphalt roads and train rail lines. If all of that weren't enough, drought conditions and the associated death and drying out of plant life make it more likely for wildfires to sweep through affected areas. If the drought somehow managed not to cause any damage to your organization's critical infrastructure, a drought and a wildfire certainly will.

Severe Storm

Finally, the number of severe storms included in the NOAA's report for Colorado came in at a whopping 42!

And while I may have quipped about the cosmetic damage hail can cause at the beginning of this article, there is potential for serious damage to both structures and people when the hail is, to quote the NOAA's report directly, "golf ball to baseball-sized" in one instance and "baseball to softball size[d]" in another.

Tornadoes were also included in this category, and the damage effecting basically everything above ground should be a concern for any organization.

Billion-dollar disasters affecting Colorado from 1980 to 2024

Source: NOAA



WILDFIRE

Events: 12
Events per Year: 0.3
Percent Frequency: 15.8%
Total Costs: \$5.0B–\$10.0B
Percent of Total Costs: 14.3%



DROUGHTS

Events: 16
Events per Year: 0.4
Percent Frequency: 21.1%
Total Costs: \$5.0B–\$10.0B
Percent of Total Costs: 14.5%



BLIZZARDS

Events: 3
Events per Year: 0.1
Percent Frequency: 3.9%
Total Costs: \$250M–\$500M
Percent of Total Costs: 0.8%



FREEZE

Events: 1
Events per Year: 0.0
Percent Frequency: 1.3%
Total Costs: \$100M–\$250M
Percent of Total Costs: 0.2%



FLOODS

Events: 2
Events per Year: 0.0
Percent Frequency: 2.6%
Total Costs: \$2.0B–\$5.0B
Percent of Total Costs: 4.1%



THUNDERSTORM

Events: 42
Events per Year: 0.9
Percent Frequency: 55.3%
Total Costs: \$20.0B–\$50.0B
Percent of Total Costs: 66.0%

What Can Be Done?

The first step to protecting your critical infrastructure is identifying what your critical infrastructure is.

Take some time to seriously consider what assets your organization cannot function without and use that to determine which extreme weather events would cause the most problems.

Next, research which disasters your organization is most likely to encounter. While the NOAA data is useful on a statewide level, it won't tell you that Weld County is the most tornado prone in the state.⁴ It won't tell you if your specific location is

in a floodplain or likely to be in the path of the next wildfire.

Thankfully, in this day and age, resources for finding this information are abundant. Check out the Colorado State Forest Service's Wildfire Risk Viewer interactive map or the Colorado Water Conservation Board's collection of information on flooding.⁵

Finally, once you know what you and your organization are dealing with, invest in upgrades and equipment that will both your organization's property and the people it serves.

The CSD Pool offers members complimentary

⁵ <https://co-pub.coloradoforestatlas.org/#/>

⁶ <https://coloradohazardmapping.com/floodHazard>

access to Crisis24's OnSolve: a mass communications platform that can be used to alert employees about damaging weather events and provide advice on how to make it through these events safely.

While you may not be able to prevent extreme weather, staying informed, vigilant, and prepared can help ensure that your organization remains functional throughout the worst of it.

If you have any questions about your coverage, would like to request a consult about business interruption plans, or would like to learn more about OnSolve, email info@csdpool.org.

What To Do After a Severe Storm?

Weather-related events are, by far, the top cause of loss for the Colorado Special Districts Pool and our members. As we enter the season for thunderstorms, tornadoes, and hail events, we want to remind everyone how to respond in the aftermath of a severe storm.

Document and Mitigate the Damage

- Inspect district property and autos to determine if any damage occurred.
- Take multiple pictures at various angles.
- Mitigate further damage by placing tarps on roofs, boarding up windows, or placing plastic sheeting over windows or windshields.
- If you need post-storm cleanup due to water, fire, or smoke damage, call SERVPRO of Greater Boulder at (303) 962-7899. Be sure to mention you are a member of the Colorado Special Districts Pool for preferred rates.
- Account for your emergency response supplies and determine if a restock is necessary.

Filing a Claim and Claim Processing

- If your district has suffered damage and you need to file a claim, complete the Colorado Special Districts Pool Property Loss Form.
- If you have multiple buildings or autos damaged in a single storm, you only need to complete one (1) property loss claim form and one (1) auto loss claim form total.
- Submit photos taken when you file a claim.
- Email the completed form to cxcsd@sedgwick.com or call toll-free: 800-318-8870, ext. 1.
- Once you have submitted the requested documentation outlined above, Sedgwick will set up the claim or claims and inform you of next steps.
- For damage to property or auto, Sedgwick adjusters will inspect or assign an independent adjuster to inspect your property to determine an estimate for repairs.

Before the Next Storm

- Perform a pre-loss roof inspection as a part of a preventative maintenance strategy to make sure that drains and gutters are clear of debris and roof flashing is not damaged. The inspection will provide a baseline so you have a better understanding of what has been damaged following a storm.
- Prepare for the next storm by developing a recovery plan with CSD Pool's Risk Management Consultants. This service is available to members as part of your membership. To talk with our staff, email safety@csdpool.org.
- Sign up for OnSolve by Crisis24. This mass communication platform allows members to notify their staff of critical events in mere seconds. With a mobile phone app, this tool allows district management to blast messages to employees through email, text message, or phone calls, replacing the traditional 'phone tree' style messaging system. This program is part of your membership benefits.
- Being prepared and informed is essential for effectively managing the aftermath of a severe storm. By documenting damage, filing claims promptly, and exercising caution when dealing with contractors, districts can safeguard their assets and ensure a smoother recovery process. Additionally, proactive measures such as regular inspections and developing a recovery plan can significantly enhance resilience against future weather-related events.

HUMAN RESOURCES



Love is Blind...So is Hiring

Knowing the resources at your disposal can help you find your company's perfect match.

CATEGORY:
HUMAN RESOURCES

TAGS:
HIRING

AUDIENCE:
ALL

by Makenzie Kellar

Picture this: you're on a date with someone that you haven't met before. Most of it is spent just getting to know who they are, but you like each other well enough that you decide to meet up again. With the basics out of the way, your conversations get to be a little more in depth. You get to see how they react when a waiter gets their order wrong at a restaurant or when traffic is worse than usual. Over the course of a few months and several more dates, you learn about their fears, their dreams, and their plans for the future.

Maybe you decide to marry this person, or maybe you decide that they're just not a good fit for you. Either way, you know that you spent enough time with them to feel confident in your choice.

Unfortunately, none of these luxuries extend to the hiring process.

Aside from the interview, most of your knowledge about a candidate is going to come from their resume which is nowhere near comprehensive enough to accurately hire someone who may become employed at your organization for years.

To help ease the pressures of the hiring process, this article will

offer some advice on how to make the most of the resources at your disposal so your organization can find its perfect match!

Referrals: The "I Met Them Through a Friend" of Hiring

If the idea of sorting through resumes makes you want to never set foot in the office again, you may want to start the hiring process by asking your employees for referrals. They understand what the job entails better than anyone and will have an idea of who would be a good fit. Your employee will likely recommend someone that they've known for at least a little while and can vouch for in terms of work ethic and personality. After all, if their name is associated with this hire, they'll want to give you the best!

While your hiring pool will likely be too small to work with if referrals are the only way you look for candidates, it can be a great way to both start the process and involve your employees.

Finding Candidates: The Online Approach

The one thing dating and hiring still manage to have in common is that much of the process has shifted to the digital space over the last several years. While finding jobs through networking is still common practice, Pew Research Center was reporting as early as 2015 that 54% of all adults and

90% of recent job seekers had looked online for potential opportunities.¹

The good news is that there are plenty of options out there that you can take advantage of for free! If your organization has Facebook or Instagram, all it takes is a post to let the public know you've got a job available.

To make extra sure that your opening is shown to people actively looking for work, list the opening on LinkedIn, Indeed, Handshake, and more. While doing this may require a bit more tech expertise than you currently have, there are plenty of online tutorials to show you how it all works. A bit of time spent learning how to use these tools can significantly increase your number of applicants.

To get the most out of your post, remember to include a concise and accurate job description and make it clear how much they'll be earning. You're not going to attract the best of the best if those people don't know what they'll be doing or if the job pays enough to cover rent.

Judging a Resume: Swipe Left or Swipe Right

Between word of mouth and listing your job opening online, you should hopefully receive several different resumes to look through. However, that still leaves you with the task of figuring out which candidates you want to call in for an interview, which can feel overwhelming if you're not sure where to start.

Before looking at a single resume, ask yourself what are your "must haves" in a candidate. Does a candidate need to have college experience or a specific degree? Do you need someone who has worked in this field before and knows the ropes? Can you train your candidates to get them the certifications they need, or do they need to have those from the start? Starting with the "must haves" is a great way to get a clearer picture of what you want and narrow down a pool of candidates.

Just remember that "must have" traits are different than traits that would make a perfect candidate. While a candidate may not have everything that you want, so long as they appear promising and have what you need, they are still worth considering.

If you want to speed this process along, asking

¹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2015/11/19/1-the-internet-and-job-seeking/>

yourself what your job candidate "must haves" are earlier in the hiring process and include it in your job listings. That way, every candidate you receive should be one that you could theoretically hire on the spot.

Your "must have" traits will probably be what are called hard skills, defined as "measurable skills you acquire through education, training or hands-on experience." These include things like coding, using different kinds of software, managing finances, etc. But just because someone knows how to do a job, that doesn't mean they'll be a good fit.

Your next step will be to look for things on a resume that indicate a candidate has the soft skills you're looking for. These can't be measured as easily as hard skills, but include essential attributes such as the ability to communicate with others, manage time, manage projects, and work independently.² If they've included hobbies or previous job experience, the activities they chose to list can give you a better sense of who they are.

While this list is not exhaustive, it's a place to start when all you have to judge a candidate's character is a piece of paper. From this jumping-off-point, and as you work through interviews, continue to expand upon your "must haves," desired soft skills, and areas of compromise.

AI: To Algorithm or Not to Algorithm

While the hiring process always adds another item to a manager's to do list, it shouldn't take too long to look over five or so resumes. But what if you get twenty? What about fifty? What if your online posting picks up traction and you end up with over a hundred? These days, some companies are relying on AI to sort through candidates while saving time with one of the most notable among them being Amazon.³

Unfortunately, this approach is not the silver bullet that many think it is. As BBC reported, not only does using AI risk filtering out quality candidates, but can also discriminate against candidates based on age and sex.⁴

A study conducted by the University of Washington

² <https://www.usnews.com/careers/articles/hard-skills-vs-soft-skills-in-the-workplace-which-is-more-important>

³ <https://www.aboutamazon.com/news/workplace/how-amazon-leverages-ai-and-ml-to-enhance-the-hiring-experience-for-candidates>

⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20240214-ai-recruiting-hiring-software-bias-discrimination>

found that even just a candidate's name can open them up to racial and gender discrimination from the AI used to sort their resumes.⁵ Even if an AI system was developed that did not discriminate at all, the candidates you reject may not speak well about your organization in the future if they find out a real person didn't even bother to look at their application. In fact, a 2023 Pew Research study found that about 66% of Americans would not even want to apply for a job if AI was used to assist in making the hiring decision.⁶

If you're only getting a handful of applications, it's best to avoid AI altogether. At that point, you'll probably be spending more time putting the resumes into your AI system of choice and writing the prompt for your hiring criteria than it would take you to just review them yourself. However, if you have enough applications coming through that using AI is a serious consideration, make sure you speak with an HR professional first to make sure you aren't opening yourself up to any legal issues in the future.

Remember, AI is a tool meant to assist you in your work and should not be making this decision for you. Use your best judgement when determining how much to let a computer take the reins when you're the one with the real understanding of what would make someone a valuable addition to your team.

Final Thoughts

While it's impossible to go over every hiring trick in the span of this article, these tips are enough to set you on the right path. That being said, there is still one more thing worth remembering. Just like dating, hiring is a two-way street where both parties need to be the right fit for each other. If you manage to find the perfect candidate, what is it about your organization that would make them want to work for you over somebody else?

Your organization should be a place that your employees can be proud of. Treat people with respect, take concerns and complaints seriously, and make sure your work culture is one that welcomes new hires and encourages them as they learn about their job. You can become the best hiring manager in the world, but that doesn't mean much if your employees don't stick around.

⁵ <https://www.washington.edu/news/2024/10/31/ai-bias-resume-screening-race-gender/>

⁶ <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2023/04/20/ai-in-hiring-and-evaluating-workers-what-americans-think/>

RISK MANAGEMENT



When is a Lifeguard Necessary for Your Risk Management?

Deciding when a lifeguard is needed and how to hire one can make or break your summer.

CATEGORY:
SAFETY

TAGS:
LOSS PREVENTION

AUDIENCE:
**MANAGEMENT
SAFETY COMMITTEES**

By Makenzie Kellar

Whether your district has an elaborate waterpark on the property or a particularly large pond, water safety should always be considered as a part of your risk management policy. According to the CDC, every year in the United States there are over 4,000 unintentional drowning deaths. For districts with particularly young visitors, it's also worth noting that more children between ages one and four years old die from drowning than any other cause of death.¹

One way to keep your guests from becoming part of these grim statistics is to hire a lifeguard, but anyone who has ever worked for an aquatics department can tell you that the process is more complicated than bringing on your average employee. When lives are on the line, a hiring manager can't afford to make mistakes.

So, let's dive into what you should know when hiring a lifeguard: when you need one, what you want to look for in your candidates, and how to keep them rescue ready.

Do You Need a Lifeguard?

This answer varies depending on what the body of water is and what resources your district has at its disposal. It's not

reasonable to expect a district to post lifeguards all along the coast of a natural lake, especially if there's not a designated swimming spot established by the district. However, for designated swimming spots, pools, waterparks, or any place where you can expect to find visitors swimming, a lifeguard is the way to go.

A good rule of thumb is that the more attractions, special features, or hazards your swimming area has, the more you need a lifeguard. If you know that a pool or water feature draws in crowds, that may also be your cue to get a lifeguard; accidents are more likely (and easy to miss) when lots of people are in and around the water at the same time.

Unfortunately, bringing on a lifeguard is an expense that not every district can afford. For many others, keeping lifeguards on the payroll year-round just doesn't make sense. After all, how many people really want to swim in the middle of winter?

In these cases, a decent compromise is to hire a seasonal lifeguard and post signage making it clear to the public whether a lifeguard is on duty or not, what hours they are on duty, and to call 911 if an incident occurs while one is not present. This helps ensure that guests fully understand the risk assumed by swimming with no lifeguard and can make an educated choice whether to proceed.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/drowning/data-research/index.html>

You can also post signs encouraging groups of swimmers to designate a “water watcher,” which is basically the aquatics equivalent of a designated driver. Encourage your guests to choose someone in the group who is an adult, can recognize the signs of a swimmer in distress, and can dial 911; and who is not under the influence of drugs or alcohol or easily distracted by their phone or other conversations to watch over other swimmers.²

To sum it up, lifeguards are recommended for spaces where you know people will be swimming, at least during busy seasons like spring and summer. If you don't have a lifeguard, at the very least post signage to make sure people know that there are none present and to remain cautious.

Lifeguard Hiring Considerations

If your district finds itself in need of a lifeguard, it's onto the hiring process! The basics of hiring still apply when choosing a lifeguard; you will want someone who is responsible, shows up to work on time, gets along with the rest of the team, etc.³

However, you will want to be sure that they are properly certified as a lifeguard. Several organizations offer basic lifeguard certifications such as the Red Cross or YMCA. The process of earning a lifeguard certification will typically include certifying trainees in CPR, First Aid, and AED use, though you should always double check with the candidate which skills were specifically included in their certification.

If you have a waterpark or particularly deep or shallow water, check if their certification has equipped them to handle rescues in those areas or if additional trainings or certifications are required. Remember, certifications usually expire after two years. When you bring a certified lifeguard onto the team, it goes without saying to make sure that their certification is up to date.

Once you've found a certified lifeguard, you're all set to hire them, right? Wrong!

While a certification is meant to show that someone has achieved the base level of proficiency needed for the job, this isn't always the case. You might have a candidate who is certified on paper but hasn't been swimming in a year and a half

and is sorely out of practice. Or you might find someone who only has experience lifeguarding smaller pools and can't perform rescues in your pool's deep end.

Whatever the case, you'll want your candidate to be able to give you a practical demonstration of their skills. This can include a swim test where you make sure they have the endurance to swim a few laps in your pool without rest, active/passive victim rescues, or scanning the pool for dangers and weak swimmers. Choose tests for your candidate that will prove to you both that they're capable of doing the job and that they can handle the nuances of your particular pool.

Once you have a someone who is properly certified and has proven to be a strong enough swimmer for the job, you're ready to hire a lifeguard!

You Have a Lifeguard! Now What?

Though it may seem like the work is finished when the hiring process is, that is far from the truth. Even the most qualified new employees need some on the job training, and a lifeguard is no exception. Help your new hire become familiar with your facility's emergency action plan and start by having a more experienced guard shadow their shifts until they're ready to work on their own.

You will also want to ensure that your lifeguards are regularly getting the chance to practice the skills they need to make rescues, which they don't often get on an average day at work. Typically, aquatics facilities will hold a monthly in-service meeting for this purpose. Though the additional focus on rescue skills may make running an in-service seem like an intimidating process, it essentially runs like your average staff meeting. Take the chance to go over new and changing pool rules, ask for feedback, and throw in a few rescues to keep your lifeguards sharp. If there's a need for it, you can also use an in-service to go over other topics that your lifeguards may face that are not necessarily related to water safety, like mandatory reporting responsibilities.

Remember, it's wonderful if your in-services are fun and engaging, but they should always be something your lifeguards take seriously. Remind them that each in-service is meant to give them the training they need to save lives, so staying focused in each meeting is incredibly important.

Even once the initial training and in-services are taken care of, you'll want to keep tabs on your lifeguard as they go about their day-to-day work. During busy summer seasons, a lifeguard can easily become overstimulated, dehydrated, or develop a heat-related illness. Any one of these will impede a lifeguard's ability to watch the water, so have your lifeguard take a break or put another guard in their place if you notice them struggling.

Other Water Safety Considerations

That just about covers the basics of bringing on a lifeguard, but having a lifeguard alone doesn't guarantee visitors' safety in and around the water.

First, accidents in aquatics facilities don't start and stop at the water. Slips, trips, and falls are a top cause of loss for many districts, and this risk is exacerbated greatly when you have a wet concrete pool deck and young swimmers insist on getting a running start for their cannonball. Make sure that both you and your lifeguards are paying attention visitor behavior in all parts of the facility and have rules in place to reduce risk.

Second, there's very little a lifeguard can do if they do not have the proper equipment. Make sure that you have rescue tubes and well-stocked first aid kits that lifeguards can access in the event of an emergency. Also, having safety equipment such as lifejackets available will allow your guests to take precautions to keep themselves safe. Just be sure to do your research before purchasing equipment you're unsure about (for instance, you don't have to look far to find reasons not to buy puddle jumpers for your pool. Stick with the life jackets).⁴

Finally, this is by no means an exhaustive list of everything involved in bringing on a lifeguard. Check your local, state, and federal guidelines as well as resources like the CDC's Model Aquatic Health Code.⁵

If all this information feels overwhelming, be sure to reach out to others for help. From personal experience, I can tell you that those who work in aquatics are some of the most passionate water safety advocates you'll ever find. If you look for the right connections, you can build not just a safety culture, but a safety community.

⁴ <https://www.parentspreventingchildhooddrowning.com/post/ditch-the-floaties-the-dangers-of-the-popular-puddle-jumper>

⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/model-aquatic-health-code/media/pdfs/2024/11/5th-Ed-MAHC-Annex-508.pdf>

² <https://ndpa.org/designateawaterwatcher/>

³ <https://www.csdpool.org/attracting-the-right-job-candidates>

Safety Hero Focuses on the 'Right Thing to Do'

Pueblo West's Steve McDowell developed a safety-conscious culture fostered on trust and dedication.



by *Makenzie Kellar*

The employees of Pueblo West Metropolitan District are quick to sing the praises of their Safety and Risk Manager Steve McDowell. So much so that not one, but two different Safety Hero nominations were submitted on Steve's behalf, and the picture they paint makes it clear that his selection as the CSD Pool's latest Safety Hero is well-deserved.

"His dedication to fostering a safety-conscious culture is evident, and he continually goes above and beyond to ensure the well-being of all team members" one nominator wrote. "Steve is a near constant presence at work sites, events, and safety incidents to take care of personnel and share lessons learned," said another. Both nominators praised his dedication and noted that Steve practically built the district's safety program during the three years he has been with the district.

However, if you ask Steve, he'll admit that the road to becoming Pueblo West Metropolitan District's invaluable safety manager was much longer than many would assume.

"It only took me thirty-two years to get my degree," Steve joked during our interview. He explained that he started his academic career studying criminology but eventually landed a job as a Colorado State Trooper in the Hazardous Materials Section. Realizing that a degree in criminology wasn't going to be useful to him anymore, he switched to fire science, then

emergency management, and eventually settled on studying safety.

In hindsight, Steve says that it was the one common thread in his previous experience. "My whole career has been safety one way or another. I may not have had the title as a Safety Manager, but everything's been about safety."

As for how he ended up as Safety Manager, that was simply a case of the right job being open at the right time. After finishing his degree, Steve discovered that the Pueblo West Metropolitan District was looking for someone to improve safety for their district. "I thought that'd be a great place to start out, grow my career, and learn."

After such a long journey to earn his degree, Steve initially came to the job hoping that things would be a little easier going forward. "When I got here, I was hoping to come to a district that had a safety program built out, I could kind of just ride the coattails into retirement." However, Steve found that this wasn't the case. Before Steve arrived, the district's safety program, as one nominator put it "needed serious work across all facets to identify and remediate safety issues."

Steve quickly realized that this job was going to be a much bigger project than he had thought it to be. While others in his position might have chosen to leave for something easier, Steve didn't seem to think there was much of a choice at all.

"It's the right thing to do," Steve said, citing a responsibility to the district's employees as the reason for his efforts. "[To] give them a good, safe program so that they go home the way they came to work."

However, if building up a safety program from the ground wasn't already a daunting task, Steve had to build one for over 140 employees across fire, emergency services, water, maintenance, parks, and administrative departments.

When asked how he managed to build a robust safety program that catered to so many different needs, Steve emphasized the importance of communicating with those on the ground and being willing to learn.

"I don't know all the jobs these people are doing. I count on them to tell me what they're doing and why they're doing it." Steve said, making it clear that the way to identify safety concerns was to be on the ground observing, helping, and learning the ins and outs of every job.

Now, Pueblo West Metropolitan District prides itself on having a much more robust safety program than it did before. But when asked about his proudest accomplishment with their safety program, Steve—instead of choosing a specific milestone or metric—answered that he was most proud of the relationship he had built with other district employees.

"I've got a pretty good rapport with everybody that I work with. And they feel comfortable—I hate to say 'tattletale'—but they feel comfortable coming to me."

When a district has as many employees and departments as Pueblo West Metropolitan District, it's sometimes hard to spot safety deficiencies unless someone is willing to talk about them. It takes not just time and effort but also trust to build a safety program that truly protects people.

Towards the end of our interview, I asked Steve what advice he would give to anyone wanting to improve safety at their district, especially to those people starting on a journey similar to his own. After taking a moment to think about it, Steve finally settled on this: talk to your people. Once again, he stressed the importance of fostering relationships with others and learning what they do before any sweeping changes can be made.

"You have to build a path before you can go down that path."

Though Steve humbly accepted congratulations from his colleagues for being chosen as a Safety Hero, he wanted to be sure that the district's front-line workers were also recognized for their dedication. To truly put his money where his mouth is, Steve has decided to use his Safety Hero award—a \$100 gift card—to fund the prizes for the district's upcoming safety fair. That way, he and his colleagues in the safety program could all have a chance to share the honor.

PROGRAM TESTIMONIAL



Inspection Prevents a Multi-Million Dollar Liability

HelixIntel's Maintenance Management System offered early warning of a serious safety hazard.

By Tia Dabney, Director of Corporate Partnerships at HelixIntel

What if a simple inspection could prevent a serious safety hazard?

That question became a reality for Wade Elms, Facilities Manager at St. Joseph Toms River in New Jersey. Like many facility managers, Wade once relied on a reactive approach, addressing issues only after they became problems. But a shift to preventive maintenance, supported by HelixIntel's Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS), changed everything.

A Hidden Risk in Plain Sight

During a routine inspection, Wade spotted a sharp piece of steel jutting out from a section of playground equipment. It was the kind of issue that could easily go unnoticed, until it became a problem. Whether it led to an injury or a liability claim, the consequences would have been serious. But because the team had a preventive maintenance system in place, the hazard was flagged and resolved early, before it escalated into something bigger.

"We're usually fixing things after they break," Wade shared. "But preventive tasks have saved us from some big problems."

Preventing the Preventable

Wade's story highlights more than just a single averted crisis. It reflects a broader shift in how facilities can manage risk. Before adopting HelixIntel, Wade's team faced several challenges: high levels of reactive maintenance, inefficient time tracking, and reliance on physical paperwork for communication.

Now, with a centralized platform, Wade can monitor all maintenance activities

in real time. "I'm on the platform 24/7," he said. "I can even warn others about potential issues as a part of our preventative maintenance, saving us time and money."

This visibility has led to measurable improvements:

- Cost savings from identifying hazards early, like the playground issue that could have resulted in a lawsuit worth millions.
- Improved employee management, including insights like how long specific tasks (e.g., changing an HVAC filter) actually take.
- Enhanced documentation, which not only streamlines operations but also strengthens preparedness in the event of litigation.

A Model for Proactive Risk Operations

Wade's story is a powerful example of how shifting from reactive to preventive maintenance can transform facility operations. By identifying risks early, streamlining documentation, and improving task oversight, his team not only enhanced safety but also avoided potentially devastating legal and financial consequences.

Tools like HelixIntel don't just support maintenance; they help embed risk awareness into everyday operations. For organizations looking to strengthen their resilience, Wade's experience offers a clear takeaway: proactive planning is one of the most effective forms of protection.

To learn more about HelixIntel, or to request a demo of the platform, email info@csdpool.org. This service is available to members at no cost.

SAFETY SOLUTIONS



Mitigating the Largest Safety Hazard: Humans

Addressing these common factors could make the difference in your organization's safety.

CATEGORY:
LIABILITY

TAGS:
RISK MANAGEMENT

AUDIENCE:
MANAGEMENT

by Kyle Brown

Over the years, I have worked in many industries and spent time with a variety of special districts. Throughout all of this experience I have seen a multitude of injuries and illnesses ranging from common injuries to career ending events. Out of all of these incidents, there is one common factor thing that stands out: All injuries have some level of human involvement that caused the situation.

It's important for me to say that I am by no means saying humans are the sole cause of injuries and there is nothing we can do to change that. What I am saying is human behavior is the root cause of most injuries, and understanding the underlying causes of these behaviors can eliminate most workplace injuries.

In this article, I will discuss the top human factors that influence injuries in the workplace. We will cover what causes these factors, the risks associated and what you can do to prevent these behaviors.

1. Lack of training and knowledge

Injuries in the workplace are often times caused by lack of knowledge and insufficient training. This is by no means the fault of the employee, but responsibility can be traced back to

management and the team training the employee.

That is why it is so important to assess each role in the district and perform a risk analysis of the position, identifying the possible hazards associated with the position. Even for organizations that only have office employees, I would want to make sure the person is trained in office ergonomics, slips trips and falls, and lifting, because even lifting a package of printer paper can lead to a back injury.

Once you have assessed the hazards associated with the position, ask yourself: Do you have a training program to educate the employee about the hazards and how to protect themselves? Training is so important because a trained employee is an employee who is empowered to make decisions that will protect themselves and rest of the team.

One common option for training is job shadowing with a senior employee. However, it is very important to ask yourself if the employee you are partnering with the trainee is going to give good instructions or teach them bad habits.

We have been focusing on training new employees, but I want to remind you continuing education and training refreshers are key to your team knowledgeable and empowered. Continuous education will help reduce the possibility of the next human cause of loss...

2. Complacency

Another major human-centric factor contributing to employee injury is complacency. The majority of injuries we see are not from your extremely hazardous tasks like going into a burning building or entering a confined space with a hazardous atmosphere. Rather they tend to come from our day-to-day activities like lifting or walking.

The reasoning behind this is that when you have a task with obvious hazards, it is easier to identify them, prepare, and take extreme caution to prevent. However, it is the mundane task that lead to most of our injuries.

Consider when you leave your car in the morning to walk into work. Before you get out, are you asking yourself what are the hazards associated with walking into the building? Probably not. On the flipside, how many have slipped or tripped walking into work? I certainly have.

Another example of complacency is frequent exposure to daily tasks. Let's use the example of climbing a ladder to an elevated height. The first time you climb the ladder you are acutely aware of the hazards and take extra precautions to remain safe. However, after climbing the same ladder everyday for years, it is easy to get into a routine and forget about performing the task, as well as the hazards. But let me ask you this...are the hazards you were exposed to on the first day still present? The answer is yes.

To help prevent complacency it is vital to remind your team that hazards are still present whether it is a job you do once a year or once a day. I also strongly encourage you to create a "refresher" training schedule for your team so you can keep the hazards in the forefront of your minds.

Lastly, be sure to devise a near-miss program within your district to discuss incidents that could have lead to an injury. After every near-miss, this program should have you asking: What happened? Why did it happen? And what can we do to prevent this from happening again?

3. It won't happen to me

This next human factor that commonly leads to injury is the mentality of "it won't happen to me" or "we have always done it this way".

While this could be considered another form of

complacency, this factor goes one step beyond because the risk is seen as too small to worry about, even though it is well-known.

This is also what I like to call the "one-in-a-million chance" argument, when an employee thinks the odds of an incident happening to them is so small that it could never happen. Well, my counterargument to this is there are 150,000 safety professionals employed in the United States who might be arguing about their "one-in-a-million chance." When you consider that according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are 15 fatalities per day at the workplace in the United States¹, those odds start to look a bit more concerning.

It's management's responsibility to notice this behavior and educate your team about the risk in a way that resonates with them. Even if it is a strict enforcement of policy, it is better to have employees mad at you and know you are doing all you can do to ensure they leave work in the same condition they arrived.

4. Improper tools and equipment

Many times when we are completing a task we find ourselves in a situation where a specific tool or piece of equipment is needed. Unfortunately, the piece of equipment is back at the office or it is a non-routine task and the tool is missing.

In most cases, you improvise and get the job done. In some cases, however, the missing tool could be the difference between life and death.

For example, consider performing the task of lifting a manhole cover. There is a tool designed to help you open the cover, and although you could use other equipment if you are missing the tool, doing so could expose you to a greater risk of injury such as smashed fingers or a strained muscle.

Consider another example: Let's say you are about to use a piece of equipment and have to isolate the equipment from its source of electricity. When this is done properly, the machine should be tested to make sure there is no electrical hazard remaining. Failure to ensure the equipment is not electrified could lead to electrocution. But what happens if you do not have the proper equipment in advance?

I have encountered incidents where staff wanted

¹ <http://www.osha.gov/data/commonstats>

to do the job correctly and safely but did not feel comfortable taking the time to get the right equipment or asking management to purchase it, resulting in a fatality.

With that in mind, it is critical to remind your team to always use or request the right equipment, and to celebrate employees who take these steps.

5. Lack of focus

This next human tendency is something we all experience: a lapse in focus. This could be caused by an illness, a personal issue, or any number of other things. But the best way to address this is to incorporate best practices that encourages staff to speak up when something is amiss.

For example, if you have an employee who is flagging traffic and the employee is sick with a common cold, it is a best practice to encourage the employee to tell you how they are feeling. If they are dizzy or tired, it could be catastrophic for them and the rest of the team if traffic is not properly being directed. It is important to notice this in yourself and your team. Also, encourage teammates to communicate this with you, because if your mind is not on the task at hand it could endanger the employee and those working with them.

Final reminders

Most workplace injuries are caused by human behaviors we are all guilty of doing. In the name of prevention, I encourage each of you to:

1. Make sure your team is aware of hazards associated with the job, and train them how to mitigate the hazards
2. Understand complacency is real, and educate employees how to keep safe work practices at the forefront of their minds.
3. Injuries do happen, and thinking "it won't happen to me" does not make you resistant to the injury. Filling safety protocols protects you from injury
4. Even if it adds extra time to your day, making sure you have the appropriate equipment could keep you and your team safe
5. Be aware of your mental state, and don't be afraid to notify your team you are not in the right headspace to safely complete a task.

Following these reminders could be the difference between a normal day at work and one that can change your life.

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COST
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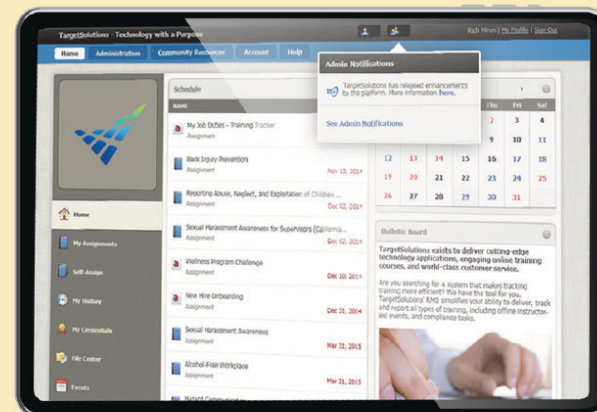


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