



# Risk Management Solutions



Winter 2015

A Quarterly Newsletter of the AMIC/MWCF Loss Control Division

## The Need for Body Cameras in Law Enforcement

By: Terry E. Sanders, Police Safety Consultant, AMIC/MWCF

One key responsibility of all police chiefs is that of “Risk Manager” – safeguarding their cities’ liability. In so doing, they not only protect themselves and their employees, they provide the best service to their communities. The use of body cameras is one strategy that greatly enhances their ability to manage this responsibility.

Video recordings in court are considered the “silent witness” because these recordings produce unprejudiced facts, and, from a liability standpoint, these recordings can, in many cases, keep you out of court. However, the August 9, 2014, Ferguson, Missouri, police officer shooting case brought nationwide focus to the need for body cameras in law enforcement beyond liability claims. If the “silent witness” had been present, the aftermath of this tragic event no doubt would have been different.

In law enforcement, we can’t control the occurrence of events; however, we must control our response to these events. Obtaining immediate and accurate information gives an agency the ability to get in front of a situation. Body cameras provide this type of critical information. Keep in mind the acronym CAM – Capture and Manage. Capturing the event on video affords you the opportunity to better manage your response. Also keep in mind that there is a very real possibility the event may be captured on a bystander’s smart phone video that you have no control over.

The AMIC/MWCF Loss Control Division recommends the use of both in-car video and body cameras; however, we realize some agencies can’t afford both. A good alternative to in-car cameras is the more cost effective body worn cameras, which usually range from \$100 to \$500 and can be purchased from a number of vendors. Some cameras can be leased, requiring you to use the vendor’s cloud for storage at a recurring cost. Chief Jim Peterson of the Guntersville Police Department pointed out during a recent visit that it might be more cost effective for smaller agencies to lease equipment and utilize the vendor’s cloud whereas larger agencies might prefer purchasing equipment and storing information on in-house servers. After researching his options, Chief Peterson decided server storage was the best and most cost effective choice for his department.

Prior to the implementation of body cameras within your department, you should first develop a written policy for the use of the cameras that specifically addresses security, anti-tampering, audit trail and chain of custody as well as what officers are mandated to record. The AMIC/MWCF Loss Control Division has several sample policies we can provide you.

Having worked internal affairs for over 10 years and having served as a police chief for another 10-plus years, I can tell you first-hand that video recordings clear the officer almost every time. Even in those relatively few cases where the video captures wrong doing, the recording still affords you the opportunity to manage your response and deal appropriately with the officer involved. Another value to having body cameras is the assistance in training. Everything from traffic stops to the method in which officers are responding to domestic violence calls can be reviewed for training and safety. Officers that have developed unsafe techniques can be identified for correction. Written policy can also be adjusted as needed based on review of video. The use of video during an after-action review of critical incidents is also helpful for improving future operational plans.

Another area of concern for police chiefs to consider is whether or not they allow officers to use their personal cameras versus cameras owned by the department. The AMIC/MWCF Loss Control Division recommends department-owned equipment for this reason: You can better determine how the cameras are used and who controls the recorded data when you own the equipment. Simply put, you don’t want video showing up on social media sites or being released to anyone without your approval.

In closing, the positives for law enforcement agencies using body cameras far outweigh the negatives. The question should not be *Can we afford this equipment?* but *Can we afford not to have it?*



*Guntersville Police Chief Jim Peterson attaches a body camera while Officer Williams checks the department’s camera server storage unit.*

**For additional information on the use of body cameras, visit [www.iacp.com](http://www.iacp.com) and [www.policeone.com](http://www.policeone.com)**

# Fire Extinguishers – Inspection and Use

Will Strength, ARM-P, Loss Control Representative, AMIC/MWCF

Having the right fire extinguisher and knowing how to use it safely can make a huge difference between putting out a small fire and suffering a major loss. If the correct fire extinguisher is properly used, a small fire can be contained and extinguished quickly – before people are injured or property is damaged.

There are many types and sizes of fire extinguishers available. Check with your local Fire Marshall to determine if you have the correct type/size extinguishers and that they are in the correct location. Fire extinguishers should be mounted on brackets or in wall cabinets with the top of the extinguisher at a maximum of 5 feet from the ground. Extinguishers over 40 pounds should be mounted at lower heights with the carrying handle about 3 feet from the floor. Access to the extinguisher should be unrestricted and the extinguisher should be in plain view. Nothing should be hanging on or covering the extinguisher. It is important to know the locations and the types of extinguishers in your workplace prior to actually using one.

## Fire Extinguisher Inspection

Fire extinguishers should be serviced annually by a licensed fire extinguisher maintenance company. In between annual service you should inspect the fire extinguishers monthly.

- Confirm the extinguisher is visible, unobstructed and in its designated location.
- Verify the locking pin is intact and the tamper seal is unbroken. Examine the extinguisher for obvious physical damage, corrosion, leakage or clogged nozzle.
- Confirm the pressure gauge or indicator is in the operable range or position, and lift the extinguisher to ensure it is full.
- Make sure the operating instructions on the nameplate are legible and facing outward.
- Ensure that the service tag is up to date.

## How to Properly Use a Fire Extinguisher

**First make sure everyone is out of the building and that someone has contacted the local fire department.** If you are in the position where you feel that you can safely extinguish a small fire and you have an escape route, remember the word **P.A.S.S.** from the National Fire Protection Agency:

**P**ull the pin from the extinguisher.

**A**im the nozzle or hose towards the base of the fire.

**S**queeze the handle to discharge the fire extinguishing agent.

**S**weep the nozzle of the fire extinguisher from side to side until the fire is out. Watch the area in case of re-ignition.

There is no substitution for hands-on training when it comes to learning how to use a portable fire extinguisher. AMIC/MWCF's Loss Control Division offers live fire extinguisher training using the latest available technology – the Intelligent Training System (I.T.S.) from BullEx. This training is intended to promote correct fire extinguisher use by every employee and is, therefore, not exclusive to fire departments. **For more information visit [www.losscontrol.org](http://www.losscontrol.org).**

*Sources: OSHA.gov, National Fire Protection Association and Amerex-fire.com*



## AMIC Hires New Claims Adjuster



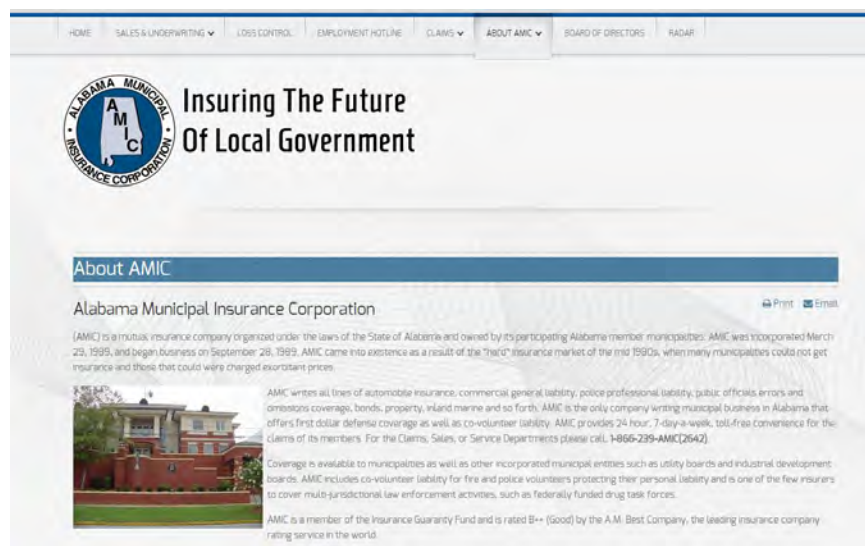
**Amanda Bailey Golson** recently joined AMIC as a Claims Adjuster from the Administrative Office of Courts where she served more than six years as a Judicial Assistant for an Elmore County District Judge. She is a graduate of the Alabama School of Math and Science and obtained Baccalaureate degrees in Criminology and Sociology from Florida Southern College, Lakeland. After relocating back to Alabama, Amanda was employed by Progressive as a Claims Adjuster. She and her husband, Kurt, reside in Elmore County and have three children. ■

## It's Time for Workers Comp Payroll Audits

It is time for the annual payroll audits for 2014. This year, most MWCF members will be subject to an independent audit from Overland Solutions, and those members will be contacted to set up an appointment. Members who are not subject to the independent audit will be receiving an Audit Request Form in the mail. Please fill in this form according to the instructions provided and return as soon as possible to our underwriters at Millennium Risk Managers.

**All audit information is due by March 31, 2015.** If you have not received a request by 1/31/15 or have any questions, please call **Carla Thienpont at Millennium Risk Managers 1-888-736-0210.**

Visit AMIC's redesigned website at [amicentral.org](http://amicentral.org)



# Richard Buttenshaw Named Assistant Operations Manager for the Municipal Workers Compensation Fund



This past December, Loss Control Representative Richard Buttenshaw was selected to serve in the recently created position of Assistant Operations Manager for the Municipal Workers Compensation Fund (MWCF). Richard, who has been with the Loss Control Division since 2003 serving AMIC/MWCF's South Alabama membership, earned a number of professional designations during his tenure, including the highly respected Certified Safety Professional (CSP) designation awarded through the Board of Certified Safety Professionals (BCSP) to individuals who meet academic standards, satisfy professional safety engineering requirements and have passed two rigorous examinations covering engineering and management safety aspects, applied sciences, legal and regulatory matters, professional affairs and other safety-related topics. In addition, Richard earned his Associate in Risk Management for Public Entities (ARM-P) in 2005 and was subsequently honored with an ARM-P Award for Academic Excellence in 2007, which is presented by the American Institute for Chartered Property Casualty Underwriters (AICPCU) and the Insurance Institute of America (IIA) to the graduate with outstanding cumulative grade averages on the examinations in this program. He also received his Certified Insurance Counselor (CIC) designation through The National Alliance in 2007. In 2010, Richard graduated 2nd in the Basic Claims Adjuster course offered through the Southern Farm Bureau Tech in Jackson, Mississippi.

Richard also took the lead on several important advancements in the Loss Control Division, including a dedicated Loss Control website ([losscontrol.org](http://losscontrol.org)) that provides detailed information about staff, programs and services as well as extensive risk management information and links to publications and online training opportunities; the design and implementation of a specialized, internal app used by each Loss Control Representative in their site report process

allowing for more immediate, consistent and comprehensive reviews; and innovative, online professional development/training via LocalGovU with courses on a variety of topics, including risk management, human resources, safety and law enforcement.

In his new role, Richard will work closely with Operations Manager, Steve Martin, to maintain and expand the outstanding services offered to MWCF members as well as remain active with the strategic, long-term development of AMIC/MWCF's Loss Control Division. Richard will also be responsible for establishing and overseeing the Alabama League of Municipalities' most recent endeavor, Alabama Debt Recovery, a program tentatively scheduled to launch in early 2016 that is specifically designed to provide a significant, value-added service to League members.

Alabama's local governments are continually seeking ways to increase revenue. To that end, during the 2014 legislative session, the League was instrumental in passing legislation allowing local governments to attempt to recover debts they are owed from an individual's state tax refund. The League believes that when all other efforts fail, this program will allow local governments to recover a portion of the outstanding debts they previously deemed lost. Richard, along with League staff, is currently working closely with the Alabama Department of Revenue to develop a comprehensive system for this new program. Great care is being taken in its implementation to ensure it adequately addresses the needs of League members while protecting the rights of citizens. There are many details and legal issues to be addressed before the program can be officially launched so the goal is to implement a pilot program in 2015 tentatively followed by the complete operational program in early 2016.

Richard is looking forward to expanding his role with the League. "I'm honored to be given this opportunity and am excited about playing a part in moving MWCF into the future as well as starting an entirely new service for League members that will provide a way for municipalities to recover lost revenue," he said. "My 11 years as a Loss Control Rep was a great foundation that provided me the opportunity to learn first-hand what services our members need to ensure the safety and vitality of their employees. In accepting this new position, I won't be leaving my roots. I strongly believe that a loss prevention program is the cornerstone for maintaining a safe, healthy workplace, and, as Assistant Operations Manager for MWCF, I will remain an active part of the Loss Control Division, just in a different role."

League Executive Director and MWCF General Manager, Ken Smith, has confidence in Richard's abilities to support MWCF as well as establish the League's debt recovery program. "His reassignment from the Loss Control Division leaves big shoes to fill," he said, "but we know he will do an outstanding job in his new capacity and that League members who have never worked with Richard will enjoy the opportunity to meet him and will benefit from Richard's great attitude, experience and work ethic."

For more information on the AMIC/MWCF Loss Control Division, visit [www.losscontrol.org](http://www.losscontrol.org). For information on the League, visit [www.alalm.org](http://www.alalm.org). ■

## New Loss Control Rep Hired for South Alabama

Prior to joining the Loss Control Division in December 2014, **Stephanie Southerland** served for three years as an appointee by Governor Robert Bentley as a Community Liaison Officer within the Long Term Community Recovery section of ADECA where she aided in the recovery efforts of communities affected by the April 2011 tornadoes. The previous 12 years, Stephanie worked for the City of Prattville as a Human Resources Administrator, Assistant City Clerk and City Clerk. She earned her Certified Public Manager certification in 1994 and her Certified Municipal Clerk designation in 2009.

Stephanie was raised in Prattville. She and her husband, Jimmy, are active members of the Eclectic United Methodist Church and have three adult sons. They also have two precious grandsons and are expecting another grandchild in July 2015. ■



# 2015 SkidCar Schedule

Through an advanced, computer-controlled driver training vehicle known as the Skidcar System, trainees learn how to react quickly and safely to a range of hazardous driving conditions. Training is conducted throughout the state at a minimal cost.

**We currently have a limited number of open dates.**

**If you want to host the SkidCar, contact Stan Fant at 251-802-6904.**

**The SkidCar calendar is also posted at [www.losscontrol.org](http://www.losscontrol.org).**

March 3-13	OPEN	August 11-21	Decatur
April 7-17	Roanoke	September 9-18	OPEN
May 12-22	Winfield	October 6-16	OPEN
June 16-26	OPEN	November 3-13	Orange Beach
July 14-24	Thomasville	December 1-11	Montgomery

**Register ONLINE at [www.losscontrol.org](http://www.losscontrol.org)!**



## Loss Control Division

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## Winter Safety DVDs

- 5.003-VHS - The Invisible Killer: Carbon Monoxide
- 5.025-VHS - Portable Generators
- 5.046-VHS - Winter Driving
- 5.058-DVD - Driving Safely in Winter Conditions
- 5.061-DVD - Road Rage: Highway Havoc
- 5.062-DVD - A DUI Story... What If?
- 7.044-DVD - Space Heaters
- 7.109-DVD - Working Safely in Cold Weather
- 7.129-DVD - The Buried Truth Uncovered with Eric Giguere
- 7.130-DVD - Drowsy Driving: It's Your Wake Up Call
- 7.133-DVD - The Top Five Things You Need to Know About the Flu
- 7.149-DVD - A Better Way to Lift (with Michael Melnik)
- 8.013-DVD - An Introduction to the Globally Harmonized System (GHS)
- 10.010-DVD - Office Ergonomics: It's Your Move
- 12.011-VHS - Static Electricity

**Video/DVD requests to: Rachel Wagner at: 334-262-2566;  
[rachelw@alalm.org](mailto:rachelw@alalm.org); or FAX at 334-263-0200.**

## Need Help Filing Work Comp Claims?

For step-by-step instructions, visit:

**[www.almwcf.org](http://www.almwcf.org)**

## Employment Practices Law Hotline

**1-800-864-5324**

Through a toll-free Employment Practices Law Hotline, members can be in direct contact with an attorney specializing in employment-related issues. When faced with a potential employment situation, the hotline provides a no-cost, 30-minute consultation.

**[www.losscontrol.org](http://www.losscontrol.org)**