

2020 COMPACT comes to a (virtual) close...an audit season to remember!

By Robin Aronson

Seems like it was just March, the flowers were beginning to bloom, and the Risk Reps were preparing to head out to travel the roadways of Washington to visit members for the yearly audit and annual reviews. COVID-19 changed that plan pretty quick and we found ourselves coming to you via various virtual platforms. “I think you are on mute, can you see my screen, you lost your video, and cute dog” became the new language as everyone adapted to using virtual platforms. A huge thank you for allowing us into your modified workspaces and for your hard work in meeting or exceeding the COMPACT compliance elements despite the challenges.

The members and Risk Management Representatives worked together again this year to formulate tailored reviews based upon individual need and applicability, selecting from three options, a traditional audit (Homelessness, Public Works [roadways emphasis], or Personnel), a Targeted Risk Management Review, or a Loss and Exposure Reduction Plan. The Risk Services staff appreciates the hard work by members to coordinate the participation in meetings and discussions.

Overall, the results of the audits and reviews were positive. For those areas needing improvement, the Risk Reps were able to share best practices with members and provide resources to assist the members. Here are just a few highlights from this year’s Option 1 audits:

New for 2020 was a Homelessness audit. 19 members tackled this new audit. Some members were just beginning to address this issue in their area and others were already fully involved in this challenging issue. Hence some difficulty here in analyzing results. Of the 19 members responding, just over 50% reported having a plan to address homelessness, with 60% reporting that the plan was formalized. Nearly 70% reported that they were considering new programs for the future. 28% had applied for or received grants to assist with homelessness. 90% reported working regionally with other jurisdictions to address homeless issues while 50% reported contracting for services to the homeless such as transportation and hygiene. Only a couple members directly operate any homeless encampments or other mitigation sites. These same members reported contracting with behavioral health specialist/navigators to serve homeless persons at these city sponsored sites. 32% partner with outside organizations to run homeless encampments or other mitigation sites. 92% have procedures in place for removal of encampments with 45% of those contracting for encampment clearing services. 63% have

municipal codes that define and regulate homeless encampments. 32% have an ordinance that addresses permitting for tent cities. This audit provided the opportunity for good discussions with the members on many challenging issues. We look forward to offering this audit again in 2021 and delving into this with more members.

Back for a second year was a Public Works audit with an emphasis on roadways. 21 members completed this audit. When it comes to maintenance of roads, streets, and sidewalks, 80% reported having a policy or procedure for responding to maintenance needs. Just over 85% have a process to identify sidewalk repair needs, and 80% have a plan to prioritize repairs. Almost 70% reported having an ordinance requesting private property owners to share some of the responsibility of maintaining adjacent sidewalks. Members enforce the ordinance in a variety of ways from sending letters to homeowners, to using door hangers, to contacting the property owner in person. 100% of members responding to the audit reported having a program to inspect for and remove roadside vegetation that creates an encroachment or visual obstruction. Members are very in tune with the *Wuthrich v. King County case*! When it came to road design, 100% reported that traffic calming, or control device installations were made following an engineering study using science-based guidelines. Members were pretty up to date with their public works contracts, making good use of WCIA's sample contract and insurance language from ADM. 21 of the [WCIA Liability Resource Manual](#). A few members reported not using indemnification language. The Risk Reps were able to share best practices with the members as to the benefits and importance of good contract language including indemnification agreements.

The Personnel audit has been around a couple years. This audit was tackled by 21 members. The audit is geared towards supervisors and managers. Nearly 70% of those responding reported they provide newly hired or promoted supervisors with training on employment laws, including discrimination laws. 90% indicated that they obtain a release/waiver from an applicant to perform background and reference checks and 90% indicated they conduct reference checks on applicants prior to making a conditional offer of employment. Regarding pre-employment drug testing, 95% indicated they do not conduct pre-employment drug screening outside of law enforcement, CDL, and other safety sensitive positions. This is a huge improvement from 2017 when the audit was initiated. All members need to follow the law in *Robinson v. City of Seattle*. Only 52% reported reviewing employee handbooks and written policies with new employees. 90% reported that supervisors and managers receive training concerning discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. Approximately 75% reported that managers and supervisors have been trained on the various leave laws. When it came to performance evaluations, only 67% provide performance reviews of new employees prior to the end of the probationary period. 86% train supervisors and managers on preparing and delivering performance evaluations overall. (*WCIA has a great class on performance evaluations—check out the [training calendar](#) on-line!*). To assist members with personnel issues, the Risk Reps provided information on WCIA training, along with sample policies and guidelines from the Liability Resource Manual.

The Targeted Risk Management Review option proved to be very popular again this year. The Risk Management Reps and members together reviewed and discussed members' contracts, programs, and policies and procedures across a wide array of topics including, volunteers, fleet programs, special events, and parks.

Watch for the January newsletter which will detail the 2021 COMPACT Audit. As a sneak peek, members in 2021 will once again work closely with their Risk Management Representative to formulate a tailored review. The Option 1 traditional audit topics will again include Homelessness and Personnel. Fleet liability will be added in as a third choice.

As we get ready to turn the calendar over to 2021 WCIA looks forward to the opportunity to continue supporting the membership!

P.S.: Be sure to watch for information in the New Year on the 2021 Grant program!