

FUTURE INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGIES



PREVENTING TOMORROW'S INJURIES TODAY

Case Study: Municipal Pooling Authority of Walnut Creek, CA

SITUATION:

The Municipal Pooling Authority, located in Walnut Creek, California provides Risk Management Services to 14 Police Departments and 20 Municipalities mostly located in Contra Costa County. Prior to working with Future Industrial Technologies, Inc. (F.I.T.) the Police Departments were experiencing a rising number of injuries resulting in a substantial trend of increasing workers' compensation costs.

"The general category of sprains and strains were predominant in the police injury analysis," says Charles Boettger, Loss Control Supervisor for the MPA.



Throughout a typical work day, law enforcement officers can encounter a great many physical challenges both in dealing with the public, getting in and out of the patrol cars and during emergency calls where the situation can escalate quickly requiring agility and fast reaction times - a fertile ground for work-related injuries.

SOLUTION:

The Municipal Pooling Authority worked with Future Industrial Technologies to devise a program specifically tailored to law enforcement.

"Police injuries were a significant element of our loss control program that were not being addressed through conventional risk management efforts," says Charles Boettger, Loss Control Supervisor for the MPA. "After analyzing this, I was referred to F.I.T. by an ergonomist. My major concern, or goal, was to find a service provider that understood the culture of Law Enforcement. F.I.T. had done prior work in the public safety arena. That was a deciding factor. They have a track record of working with police."

F.I.T. recommended the Backsafe® program customized for law enforcement, with both classroom training and an obstacle course involving the use of an actual police car in a police station setting. The program was designed to address injuries caused by lifting, pushing, pulling, twisting, bending and stooping. The program also addressed other risks that law enforcement faces, such tripping hazards, by teaching proper techniques for stepping over barriers and on to stable surface before proceeding.

Initially the goal was to obtain the understanding, recognition and support of the program by the command staff. Senior Police Managers were invited to attend a Backsafe class and asked to provide a program evaluation - which were 100% favorable. A secondary, but important obstacle encountered in the beginning, according to Boettger, was getting the police departments to allocate the training time to the Backsafe program. The program is not an element of the regulating authority, Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) mandates.

RESULTS:

"The major non-statistical success of the Backsafe program was that we, as the Municipal Pooling Authority, have received NO complaints at all - and in fact, have received many compliments from the officers," says Boettger. "In following up with the police departments, we have found that the understanding of the Backsafe training program has filtered down to the patrol officer on the street - a major accomplishment."

"In the two complete fiscal years subsequent to the Backsafe program, we have documented a reduction in the lift, push, and pull type of injuries by 60 percent," says Boettger, "and a reduction in the cost of those injuries by approximately 90 percent!"

"In addition, we believe that this effort to address police injuries has produced some synergistic benefits, with respect to the entire police workers' compensation program. **The overall cost of police injuries after the implementation of the Backsafe program has been reduced from \$3.5 million per year to \$1 million per year over a two year period of time," he says, "representing a 70 percent decrease."** (Boettger noted that since MPA only focused on the Backsafe program, it is unclear if there were other contributing factors producing the remarkable results.)

"The F.I.T. trainers communicated very well with the police departments and they were very well received," says Boettger. "The F.I.T. staff has been extremely cooperative and has been diligent in following up and scheduling individual training services with the Police Departments directly, which has been a huge benefit to us on the administrative side."

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About Future Industrial Technologies // FIT offers workplace safety and ergonomics training programs. **Backsafe®** teaches employees how to perform their specific job tasks in a manner that is biomechanically correct. **Sittingsafe®** teaches office employees how to adapt their existing workstations so they are ergonomically correct. These injury prevention programs make your workplace safer and are proven to reduce injuries and worker compensation insurance costs.

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