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SPRING FEVER

The recent warm, sunny days have given us spring fever and a chance to begin seasonal work chores around our buildings. Workers are taking out the power mowers, hedge trimmers, weed cutters, leaf blowers and ladders to tackle the chores of another season.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reports that approximately 230,000 people receive treatment in hospital emergency rooms each year for injuries related to lawn and garden tools. This does not include the number of people that fall from ladders, and slip, trip or fall while working outside. Falls from all types of portable ladders are one of the leading causes of occupational fatalities and injuries. How can you protect yourself from injury?

Did You Know



You can access, complete and submit all forms via your client Web site.



Four Point HR offers our clients direct deposit services. Contact your client relationship manager for more details.



Work-related injuries must be reported to the Four Point HR Risk Management Department immediately and no later than 8 hours from time of incident.

*Plan the work carefully and don't try to do it all at once. Stretch before you begin to loosen up. Use sun block and wear a hat. Wear sturdy leather shoes—not tennis shoes—and safety glasses.

*Be mindful of equipment with fast-moving blades, cutting lines and high air flow that can kick up dust, sticks, stones and glass.

*Operators of noisy leaf blowers, weed cutters and power mowers should protect their hearing with earplugs or muffs.

*Always inspect the ladder first. If the ladder is damaged, remove it from service and tag it until repaired or discarded. Only use ladders and appropriate accessories (ladder levelers, jacks or hooks) for their designed purposes. Free ladders of any slippery material on the rungs, steps or feet.



TIMESHEETS:

Are They Really Necessary?

According to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), employers must keep specific wage and hour records for each employee entitled to overtime.

This is commonly tracked with a form called the "Timesheet" or "Timecard". Information on this form should include the following:

1. Time and day of week when the employee's workweek begins
2. Hours worked each day
3. Total hours worked each workweek (hours **worked** over 40 in a week should be paid at the overtime rate or time and one half of regular pay rate).
4. Basis on which employee's wages are paid (ex: \$9.00/hour, \$400/week)
5. Regular hourly pay rate
6. Total daily or weekly straight-time earnings
7. Total overtime earnings for the workweek
8. All additions to or deductions from the employee's wages
9. Date of payment and the pay period covered by the payment

If you are unsure about your timekeeping methods or have questions, please contact your Client Relationship Manager.

Why is it so important to maintain these records? The Wage and Hour division of the Department of Labor is responsible for making sure businesses are meeting federal labor laws, including child labor, overtime, and minimum wage requirements and their auditors can review a business's timekeeping and payroll records at any time. If a company is found to be in violation of these laws, they may face hefty penalties.

An employee can bring charges against his employer if he thinks his exemption status has been compromised. By keeping timesheets, employers have documentation if such inquiries are made, and they can quickly rectify or diffuse the situation. This documentation should be kept for at least three years.



IRS Tax Tips 2009

Did you receive your W-2? These documents are essential to filling out most individual tax returns. You should receive a Form W-2 Wage and Tax Statement from each of your employers each year. Employers have until February 2, 2009 to provide a 2008 W-2 earnings statement in electronic or paper form. If you haven't received your W-2, follow these steps:

Contact your employer. Inquire if and when the W-2 was mailed. If it was mailed, it may have been returned to the employer because of an incorrect or incomplete address. After contacting the employer, allow a reasonable amount of time for them to resend or to reissue the W-2.

Contact the IRS. If you have not received your W-2 by February 17th, contact the IRS for assistance at 800-829-1040. You'll need the following information:

Employer's name, street address, city, state, and zip code;

Your name, street address, city, state, and zip code;

Your Social Security number; and

An estimate of the wages you earned, the federal income tax withheld, and the period of time you worked for that employer. The estimate should be based on year-to-date information from your final pay stub or leave-and-earnings statement.

File your return. You **must file your tax return on time** even if you do not receive your Form W-2. If you have not received your Form W-2 by February 17th, and have completed steps 1 and 2 above, you may use Form 4852, Substitute for Form W-2, Wage and Tax Statement. Attach Form 4852 to the return, estimating income and withholding taxes as accurately as possible. There may be a delay in any refund due while the information is verified.

File a Form 1040X. On occasion, you may receive your missing documents at a later date and some may have conflicting information. You may receive a Form W-2 or W-2C (corrected form) after you filed your return using Form 4852, and the information differs from what you reported on your return. If this happens, you must amend your return by filing a Form 1040X, Amended U.S. Individual Income Tax Return.

Form 4852, Form 1040X, and instructions are available on the IRS Web site, IRS.gov or by calling 800-TAX-FORM (800-829-3676).

Additional information:
www.IRS.GOV
irs.ustreas.gov/



BENEFITS AT LITTLE OR NO COST

Our economic situation is has led to lean times, and employers are looking for ways to cut costs without jeopardizing employee satisfaction. Benefits can contribute to a more positive working environment and we've compiled a list of benefits that can be provided at little or no cost to the employer:

- **Flexible hours** – Not only is this a benefit to the employee but to neighboring business as well. The typical 8 to 5 workday creates a traffic nightmare. Many major cities have rewarded businesses for creating non-traditional work hours such as 7:30AM - 4:30 PM.
- **Free Parking** – Providing on-site or nearby parking can save your employees valuable time and avoid the stress of searching for a spot and the cost of parking in a lot.
- **Carpools** -- Arrange a bulletin board where employees can set up car pools. In some cities, carpooling staff may qualify for benefits from the city.
- **Telecommuting** – This benefit can attract talent and skills from a wider geographic area as well as highly qualified and very motivated individuals who want or need to work from home.
- **Wellness Programs** – These programs alleviate stress and contribute to your employees' overall health. The cost cannot be deducted as a business expense, but you can contact a local gym to negotiate a group rate and pass the otherwise unavailable discount to your staff.
- **Coffee or Company Store** -- Set up a company store in a small area in your office where employees can enjoy free coffee and purchase snacks at a discount. Appoint a staff member to shop for the snacks at a warehouse store.
- **Job-related seminars /workshops** – Local businesses may offer workshops free of charge to the employer for the chance to advertise a product or service. For example: a tool company may provide a seminar to a manufacturing facility or auto repair shop.
- **Services that double as benefits** – These services can include Internet access during lunch hours or after hours and allowing employees to advertise approved charity functions to other employees

Many of these benefits are very attractive to staff and of little or no cost to the employer. They can elevate morale and improve the overall working environment.