

# News & Risk Management Review

SUMMER 2023



S | D | A | O

SPECIAL DISTRICTS  
ASSOCIATION OF OREGON

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## SDAO Board of Directors

### President

Todd Heidgerken, Clackamas River Water

### Vice President

Ben Stange, Polk County Fire District #1

### Secretary

Emily Robertson, Multnomah County Drainage District #1

### Treasurer

Kathy Kleczek, Union Health District

### Past-President

Michele Bradley, Port of Tillamook Bay

### Board Members

Nick Bakke, Rogue Valley Sewer Services

MaryKay Dahlgreen, Lincoln County Library District

Adam Denlinger, Seal Rock Water District

Jennifer Holland, Sisters Park & Recreation District

Paula Miranda, Port of Newport

Scott Stanton, Umatilla County Fire District #1

Brent Stevenson, Santiam Water Control District

## Upcoming Board Meetings

### SEPTEMBER 14

SDAO Salem Office | 10:00am

## Executive Director

Frank Stratton

## Services

Awards, Education and Training, Internship Grant, Legislative, Research and Technical Assistance, Scholarship and Grant Fund. and SDAO Advisory Services, LLC

## Contact

### Main Office

PO Box 12613 | Salem OR 97309-0613

Toll-Free: 800-285-5461

Phone: 503-371-8667

Email: [sdao@sdao.com](mailto:sdao@sdao.com) | Web: [www.sdao.com](http://www.sdao.com)

### Claims Office

PO Box 23879 | Tigard OR 97281-3879

Toll-Free: 800-305-1736

Phone: 503-670-7066

# MEMBER SCHOLARSHIP GOLF TOURNAMENT

## *& Training Scholarship Opportunity*

**By Frank Stratton, Executive Director**



Dust off your clubs and join us for an exciting afternoon of golf at the Chehalem Glenn Golf Course in Newberg. This is a great opportunity to network with other SDAO members as well as meet sponsors and staff. Our tournament is a very fun and easygoing event which makes it perfect for all skill levels. Registration opens on July 3rd and fills up quickly!

The most important part about the golf tournament is that it is the primary way that we fund the SDAO Scholarship and Grant Fund. This means that any and all profit made from the tournament goes directly to training scholarships for our members. Over the past several years, we have been able to provide over \$25,000 in funding for educational opportunities.

These scholarships are given out year-round and the application process is simple. If you are interested in learning more, visit our website at [www.sdao.com/sdao-scholarship-and-grant-fund](http://www.sdao.com/sdao-scholarship-and-grant-fund). Here you can read more about the program, download an application, and see companies that have and are currently supporting the fund.

If there is a training you'd like to attend, be sure to apply! These scholarships can be used for any educational opportunity that is related to functions of a special district – and they are not limited to SDAO events. It is our goal to make sure that every special district representative stays current with their education about local government matters.

I hope to see you at the golf tournament in September!



2023 SDAO

*Member Scholarship*

# GOLF



TOURNAMENT

SEPTEMBER 15, 2023



**\$45 ONE PLAYER**  
**\$180 FOURSOME**

**11AM**

**CHEHALEM GLENN GOLF COURSE**

4501 E FERNWOOD RD, NEWBERG, OR 97132

REGISTRATION WILL OPEN JULY 3RD. PLEASE WATCH YOUR  
EMAIL INBOX AND OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION.

P: 1.800.285.5461

E: [MEMBERSERVICES@SDAO.COM](mailto:MEMBERSERVICES@SDAO.COM)

# MEMBER SATISFACTION SURVEY

We are conducting a member satisfaction survey to help us ensure we are meeting the needs and expectations of our members. Your answers will shape the future of the association.

This survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. As both a gesture of our appreciation and incentive to complete the survey as quickly as possible, we will place your name into a drawing for one of four \$25 Visa gift cards. We encourage everyone from your district to participate.

The deadline to complete the survey is **Friday, July 14th** and the drawings will be held on July 19th. Winners will be notified by email and/or phone.

Please visit <https://cvent.me/YWX8nA> to take the survey.

## Congratulations

TO OUR RECENT ACADEMY CERTIFICATE RECIPIENTS!

### Board Leadership Academy

#### Certificate Recipients



**Paul Davies**  
Central Lincoln PUD



**James Duggan**  
Tualatin Valley Water District

### SDAO Academy

#### Certificate Recipients



**Katelynn Niece**  
South Fork Water Board



**Joseph Schlosser**  
Rockwood Water PUD

# OREGON MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE



An increase to the minimum wage rates in Oregon will take effect on July 1, 2023. The minimum wage rates will increase as follows:

- Standard Minimum Wage: \$14.20 per hour
- Portland Metro Minimum Wage: \$15.45 per hour
- Non-Urban Minimum Wage: \$13.20 per hour

The Portland metro minimum wage is \$1.25 more than the standard minimum wage, and the nonurban minimum wage is \$1.00 less than the standard minimum wage.

Oregon employers are required to post minimum wage posters. Downloadable posters reflecting the new minimum wage rates as of July 1, 2023 will be available on BOLI's website free of charge by June 1, 2023. Please visit the Oregon BOLI website for more information:

<https://www.oregon.gov/boli/Pages/index.aspx>.

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP UPDATE FORMS

Our annual membership update has been mailed to all district's key contacts. Each year, we request up-to-date contact information for your district and your annual budget for SDIS insurance purposes. If you prefer to access these forms electronically, you can access these on the SDIS Insurance Site at [www.sdis.org](http://www.sdis.org):

- Log in at [www.sdis.org](http://www.sdis.org)
- Select Insurance from the menu on the left
- Select Forms, then Documents
- From the tabs at the top, select Membership Services

You may return your completed forms by email, mail, or fax. If you have any questions, please contact us at [memberservices@sdao.com](mailto:memberservices@sdao.com) or **800-285-5461**.

# 2023 SDAO INTERNSHIP GRANT PROGRAM

*Update!*

College-level students across the state will have more opportunities in securing summer internships with Oregon's special districts this year with about \$40,000 in matching internship grants awarded to 14 SDAO members.

Essential and critical to Oregon's communities, special districts deliver much-needed services to their communities while also supporting their local workforce. In addition, many districts offer summer internships to college-level students in their area who are seeking to learn more about local government careers. SDAO recognizes and supports these efforts by providing matching grants through the SDAO Internship Grant Program.

To be considered for a matching grant, districts must submit applications outlining the details of their project, the benefits it will bring to the district, and how they will utilize a summer intern. The maximum grant is \$3,000 and must be matched by the district at 50%. For example, a project that will cost \$6,000 or more is eligible for a \$3,000 grant. At the end of the summer, recipients must submit a project summary and receipts to SDAO.

## THE FOLLOWING DISTRICTS RECEIVED A GRANT:

- Aurora Fire District
- Central Lincoln P.U.D.
- Crook County Parks and Recreation
- Halsey-Shedd RFPD
- Lower Umpqua Library District
- McKenzie Fire & Rescue
- Nesika Beach-Ophir Water District
- Nestucca RFPD
- Netarts Water District
- Owyhee Irrigation District
- Polk County Fire District #1
- Springfield Utility Board
- Sunriver Service District
- Tri County Cooperative Weed Management Area

For more information about the program, please visit [www.sdao.com/internship-grant-program](http://www.sdao.com/internship-grant-program).

# CONSULTING SERVICES PROGRAM UPDATE

BY: SHANTA CARTER, CONSULTING SERVICES MANAGER

*"REST IS NOT IDLENESS, AND TO LIE SOMETIMES ON THE GRASS UNDER TREES ON A SUMMER'S DAY, LISTENING TO THE MURMUR OF THE WATER, OR WATCHING THE CLOUDS FLOAT ACROSS THE SKY, IS BY NO MEANS A WASTE OF TIME." — JOHN LUBBOCK*

There's nothing better than summertime, is there? With seemingly longer weekends, the shining sun is out in its full glory dictating travel, vacations, long drives, beach trips and more. And in between all the fun summer activities, our work still needs to be done. With new board members being elected and half the year under our belts, you may be thinking about what needs to be accomplished. Below are a few things to think about as you're jotting down your list of things to do or to consider.

**Board Training.** With the election of new board members, attending a board training has never been more important. This year you will have the opportunity to attend Board Member Duties, Liabilities and Responsibilities with Eileen Eakins and Board Member Relations, Expectations and Ethics with George Dunkel. Please visit [www.sdao.com/sdao-board-of-directors-and-management-staff-training-series](http://www.sdao.com/sdao-board-of-directors-and-management-staff-training-series) for upcoming dates.

**Board Practices Assessment.** So, you didn't elect any new board members this year; however, you just want to gauge how your district is fairing regarding your board's governance practices. This is a great time to schedule a Board Practices Assessment (BPA). The BPA is conducted in a 90-minute, on-site, facilitated meeting with the full board and management/staff personnel who normally participate in the board's meetings. The BPA is a self-assessment process in which participants evaluate the board's effectiveness in key performance areas to identify strengths and weaknesses in the board's governance practices. Within a week following the meeting, the board receives a written summary of their self-assessment along with a document called Consultant's Impressions and Recommendations.

**Organizational Assessment.** It never hurts to ensure that your organization is running smoothly. Our team of consultants have the expertise to assist your district with assessing your overall operation. With a look from the outside, our consultants can provide you with guidance and recommendations that will set your district up for long-term success. Consultants assess organizational efficiencies and effectiveness, financial sustainability, personnel management, operating policies and procedures, staff and board training opportunities and involvement, and specific operational activities associated with the type of district being assessed. A written report is provided to the district that summarizes the consultant's findings and recommendations for improvements.

**District Manager Transitioning.** Every district will experience a change in leadership. Being prepared for that change, be it suddenly or planned, will impact the short- and long-term future of the district. We have developed a guide to assist districts with planning for and implementing a process that will ultimately lead to a successful transition from one district manager to another.

**Free Consulting Services.** Members in the SDIS general liability program are eligible for up to eight hours of free consulting services each year provided by a team of experienced consultants. After the eight hours of complimentary service is exhausted, members will have the option of continuing consulting services at a reduced hourly rate. Members that are not in the general liability program can access the program at the reduced hourly rate; however, are not eligible for the free 8 hours of consulting services.

Please visit [www.sdao.com/consulting-services-program](http://www.sdao.com/consulting-services-program) to learn more about the services we provide and how we may be able to assist your district. We look forward to hearing from you!

# The Save Lives Oregon Harm Reduction Clearinghouse

How Special Districts can access naloxone and other harm reduction supplies at no cost

What is the Save Lives Oregon (SLO) Harm Reduction Clearinghouse?

The SLO Harm Reduction Clearinghouse is a project of the Save Lives Oregon initiative. The SLO Harm Reduction Clearinghouse provides supplies such as life-saving naloxone and wound care supplies to organizations that qualify, at no cost.

Why should Special Districts keep naloxone on hand and consider distributing free naloxone to people who use drugs or people at risk of overdose?

Special districts are in most cases one of very few touchpoints in rural communities where people who use drugs and people at risk of overdose may be able to access life-saving supplies, including naloxone.

While the SLO Harm Reduction Clearinghouse prioritizes the direct distribution of naloxone to people who use drugs so that the naloxone may be used by them when they are a bystander, or on them by a bystander, the project also understands that not every special district has the capacity or ability to engage in direct distribution of supplies.

For this reason, the Harm Reduction Clearinghouse offers two tracks for special districts seeking no cost harm reduction supplies, including naloxone.

How can Special Districts access no cost naloxone via the SLO Harm Reduction Supply Clearinghouse?

Special Districts in the following categories – Fire/EMS, Hospital/Health Center, Library, Parks and Recreation, Ports and Transit – are eligible to access no cost harm reduction supplies via two different application tracks:

**TRACK 1:** For special districts that need naloxone for staff to carry in the event of an onsite overdose emergency AND to hand out to people at highest risk of overdose, injury, or infection

due to drug use.

- People who use drugs and people at risk of overdose need naloxone to save lives. In Oregon, a potential bystander was present in over half of overdose deaths in 2020, indicating there may have been an opportunity for lifesaving interventions, such as administering naloxone, at the time of the person's fatal overdose.
- Special districts are uniquely positioned to help get more naloxone into the hands of people in rural and frontier communities.

**TRACK 2:** For special districts that need naloxone only for staff to carry in the event of an onsite overdose emergency.

\*\*Upon acceptance into the Clearinghouse, all special districts are assigned a dollar amount to be spent on supplies offered through the Project. Special districts opting for Track 1 will receive a larger amount of funds to spend on supplies due to distribution efforts.

What information will a participating Special District need to track and report?

Participating Special Districts will be required to report the number of naloxone doses used, and if applicable, the number of doses distributed to community members on a month-to-month basis.

What are the steps to apply and participate in the Save Lives Oregon Harm Reduction Clearinghouse?

Step 1: Application

Complete and submit the application form <https://tinyurl.com/2xzn6pba>

Only one application is needed for each organization. Please note: The following are necessary to complete an application:

- A Secretary of State Organization/Entity Registry Number. The number can be located using the "Find a Business" Search function on the Oregon Secretary of State webpage via [sos.oregon.gov/business/Pages/find.aspx](https://sos.oregon.gov/business/Pages/find.aspx)
- Employer Identification Number (EIN) or Federal Identification Number (FIN)

Once an application is submitted, the SLO Clearinghouse team will reach out to confirm eligibility. The application acceptance process takes about a week.

Step 2: Account Set-up and Bridge Naloxone

Once an application is accepted, the account set up process begins, which can take up to 90 days to complete. The agency will be given the opportunity to order naloxone during this time to bridge the account set-up process.

Step 3: Ordering

After the account is set up, sites can order naloxone directly through the SLO Clearinghouse distributors.

Step 4: Reporting

Report monthly SLO Clearinghouse supply distribution at <https://bit.ly/3EF9SKA>

Step 5: Activities

Receive support as needed from the SLO Clearinghouse team.

Who can I contact if I have questions about the application or the project?

Contact [info@savelivesoregon.org](mailto:info@savelivesoregon.org) with questions about the SLO Harm Reduction Supply Clearinghouse application or program.

# ADVANCING TOP PRIORITY NSDC FORMALLY PROPOSES FEDERAL DEFINITION OF 'SPECIAL DISTRICT'

**BY: COLE ARREOLA-KARR**

NATIONAL SPECIAL DISTRICTS COALITION

The National Special Districts Coalition (NSDC) announced on May 10th its proposed federal definition of “special district,” marking a pivotal step in the organization’s top federal policy priority.

Despite approximately 35,000 special districts providing essential local government services to millions of Americans, there is no single definition for “special district”. The absence has led to inconsistencies in how special districts are referenced as eligible for federal programs and additional hardship to access federally-sourced assistance for infrastructure projects and community programs.

The NSDC Executive Committee unanimously approved the definition, which a working group of the nation’s special district leaders crafted and submitted. NSDC’s proposed federal definition of “special district” reads:

“Special District” – A political subdivision of a State, with specified boundaries, created pursuant to general law or act of the State, for the purpose of performing limited and specific governmental or proprietary functions, except that is not a school district, college, county, city, town, township, village, parish, borough, or other general purpose unit of government.

The NSDC-proposed definition will be the cornerstone of future Coalition advocacy on the subject. Federal special district advocates aim to secure the definition to set a benchmark for

the term. Meanwhile, advocacy will continue to ensure special districts are eligible for relevant federal programs soon to be considered for reauthorization or in pertinent legislation proposing new programs to assist local government services.

While an early definition was legislatively posed in the 116th and 117th Congresses with the Special Districts Provide Essential Services Act, the nation’s special district leaders and stakeholders recognized a need in early 2023 to revisit the previous definition with greater engagement as the Coalition has developed, with more dedicated time, and with additional discussion and deeper analysis.

“This definition is the culmination of three years of nationwide outreach, coalition building, research, and of promoting awareness of special district services to members of Congress and the Executive Branch – with more work to do ahead,” said Cole Arreola-Karr, NSDC Federal Advocacy Director. “A special thank you to members of NSDC’s working group and all supporting partners for their dedication to this effort. The Coalition looks forward to working with grassroots, state, and national special districts stakeholders as well as fellow local government organizations to ensure special districts are defined, understood, and may experience greater access to federally-funded programs for local government.”

The NSDC Working Group to Define “Special

District” was comprised of special district leaders and stakeholders from Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Oregon, South Carolina, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. The working group rigorously examined how special districts fit within the structures of local government across state lines, received input from the NSDC Advocacy Team (TFG and Paragon Government Relations), and met with U.S. Census Bureau representatives for deeper discussions on how the federal government classifies special districts in its local government statistics.

Special districts are local governments created by a community to perform a specific service, or services, that another unit of government is not otherwise providing. Special districts have their own tax and revenue base, may issue bonds, and are overseen by locally-elected or locally-appointed boards of directors. Common services special districts provide include drinking water, wastewater treatment, fire protection, emergency response, port and harbor, hospital, irrigation, electricity, park and recreation, library, resource conservation, airport, cemetery, mosquito abatement, transit, flood control, and more.

The National Special Districts Coalition is the only national organization federally representing and advocating for all special districts. The Coalition strives to advocate for elevate awareness of the nation’s special districts and the critical, essential services they provide in thousands of communities to millions of Americans.

For more information on efforts to federally define “special district” and questions on how to get involved with the Coalition, contact Cole Arreola-Karr, NSDC Federal Advocacy Director, at [\*\*colek@nationalspecialdistricts.org\*\*](mailto:colek@nationalspecialdistricts.org).



**WHAT IS A  
SPECIAL  
DISTRICT ?!**

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

HASINA WITTENBERG & MARK LANDAUER  
SDAO GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

\*\*INFORMATION IN THIS ARTICLE WAS CURRENT AS OF JUNE 8, 2023\*\*



What started out as a normal session has turned into a historical standstill with the walkout of the Senate Republicans. The Senate last met on May 2nd and hasn't been able to establish a necessary quorum since. Though a \$325 per day fine has been imposed for unexcused absences, it doesn't appear that Senate Republicans will return before the last day of session (June 25th). Many of the bills that have passed the House and are awaiting a vote are at risk of dying at the end of session.

## **LEGISLATIVE DEADLINES/WALKOUT UPDATE**

As a result of the Senate Republican walkout denying Senate floor quorum, the Senate hasn't been able to advance any legislation since May 3rd. The Governor has been meeting with both Republicans and Democrats and those meetings haven't been going well.

In the meantime, state agency budgets continue to move forward along with a handful of policy bills. As of press time, there are at least three potential outcomes regarding next steps:

Bills make it "as far as they can" in a queued/teed up fashion in the event Senate Republicans return to pass bills. Senate Republicans have indicated that they plan to return on the last day of session to pass "lawful, substantially bipartisan budgets and bills."

The Legislature adjourns. Functionally, one chamber cannot adjourn sine die unless they are within the three-day window prior to June 25th; as a result, sine die adjournment couldn't occur for several weeks. Some interest groups believe that this is the proper course of action and will prevent Republicans from dictating and/or picking or choosing which bills can live or die by returning on the final day of the legislative session.

Article IV, Section 11. Legislative officers; rules of proceedings; adjournments. Each house when assembled, shall choose its own officers, judge of the election, qualifications, and returns of its own members; determine its own rules of proceeding, and sit upon its own adjournments; but neither house shall without the concurrence of the other, adjourn for more than three days, nor to any other place than that in which it may be sitting.

Legislative leaders come to an agreement that results in the Legislature returning to its

"regularly scheduled programming" and the legislative session proceeds in its normal fashion and form.

Of the 13 Republicans and Independents Senators, all but Fred Girod (Stayton), David Brock Smith (Port Orford), and Dick Anderson (Lincoln City), have accrued ten or more unexcused absences which may prevent them from holding office in a future election.

If the senators do not return, we anticipate a special session to take place in July.

## **IMPORTANT BILLS AFFECTING SPECIAL DISTRICTS**

Prior to the walkout, there were two victories for Oregon's special districts including the passage of HB 2110 and our work in killing HB 3515.

### **HB 2110**

HB 2110 is the Secretary of State's legislation which makes several changes to the statutes governing municipal audits. The bill increases the threshold for the municipal audit exemption from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 and the review threshold from \$150,000 to \$250,000. These thresholds have not been increased since 2005; SB 837 (2005), which enacted the increase, was passed in 2005 when SDAO spearheaded the legislation.

Over the past few years, the cost of doing business has gone up exponentially causing small districts to exceed the \$150,000 threshold provided for in ORS 297.435. A municipal audit review can cost a district between \$7,000 to \$10,000 which can cause financial hardship for many of our small districts. As an example, one of our small districts reported to SDAO during the interim that they were on the verge of going over the \$150,000 threshold last fiscal year by roughly \$35,000 (the total budget was \$185,000). After many calls to auditors approved by the Secretary of State, the district received a handful of calls/emails in response. The auditors all had the same answer, "we aren't taking new clients." There is a shortage of auditors who are willing to do this work.

In addition, it doesn't make sense to spend \$10,000 because a district exceeds a threshold by several thousand dollars. Spending \$10,000 for audit purposes does not make good fiscal sense and can amount to a few months of payroll,

typical monthly expenditures or elimination of a small project that requires funding.

HB 2110 will benefit a large number (nearly 400) of small districts who are having difficulty, not only finding a municipal auditor to serve the district but affording the cost of a municipal audit. SDAO introduced HB 2254 to accomplish the same provisions contained in HB 2110. SDAO is grateful that the Secretary of State's Office included our suggested language in HB 2110.

### **HB 3515**

House Bill 3515 (introduced by Representative Travis Nelson of Portland) would have allowed the City of Portland to create a new park and recreation district (with taxing authority) and have the governing body of the city serve as its board of directors. This bill only applied to Portland.

Though the bill drew much support from organizations in Portland, SDAO strongly opposed it along with Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District, Willamalane Park and Recreation District, and Bend Park and Recreation District. The bill had a public hearing at the House Committee of Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans on March 30th and did not move forward.

### **SENATE REVENUE COMMITTEE HEARS KICKER REPEAL**

The Senate Revenue Committee heard a series of bills related to the repeal and/or referral of a repeal of the personal kicker. Oregon's kicker is the result of a 1980 ballot measure that is triggered when the state's revenue for a two-year budget is 2% higher than forecasted. In 2000, voters added the kicker law into Oregon's Constitution. The corporate kicker was suspended in 2005-07. In 2012, a new measure dedicated to the state's General Fund for K-12 public education and not back to corporations. Current projections are that Oregonians will share a \$5.5 billion kicker (tax credit vs an actual refund check) when they file 2024 tax returns. Governor Kotek was recently quoted as saying she "has no plans to change" any of the current kicker laws.

### **UFCW ANNOUNCES RECALL OF SPEAKER PRO TEM**

The United Commercial Food Workers (UFCW) announced this week that they plan to attempt to recall House Democrat Paul Holvey (D-Eugene). Holvey is a union carpenter and is one of the most labor friendly Democrats in the House of Representatives. UFCW is unhappy that their priority bill allowing for unionization of cannabis workers failed to move forward in Holvey's committee.

### **LOOKING FORWARD**

We will continue to keep you updated on the outcomes of this legislative session with email updates. Please watch for our annual legislative report which will be made available to all districts this fall.



# 2024 SDAO AWARDS Program

Help us celebrate the ingenuity, creativity, and diversity of our members by nominating an individual or special district for the SDAO Awards Program! This program recognizes the outstanding accomplishments of member districts as well as district board members, managers, employees, and volunteers.

## **Outstanding Special District Program (District)**

This award category recognizes innovative projects and programs, outstanding safety, public information, public involvement in a district decision making process, and outstanding achievement. Three subcategories have been established for this award:

- Districts with 5 or fewer employees
- Districts with 6 to 25 employees
- Districts with 26 or more employees

## **Outstanding Special District Service (Individual)**

This award category recognizes individuals who have contributed substantially to the improvement and successful operation of their special district. Four subcategories have been established for this award:

- Board Member
- Manager (Nomination must be submitted by the district's board of directors.)
- Employee (Nomination must be submitted by the district's manager.)
- Volunteer

SDAO Board of Directors and SDIS Board of Trustees members are ineligible to be nominated for this award. Winners will be recognized at the 2024 SDAO Awards Banquet in Seaside on February 10th.

The nomination form will be sent via email and mail in August. It will also be available on our website at: <https://www.sdao.com/sdao-awards-program>

# SDAO BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MANAGEMENT STAFF TRAINING SERIES

## BOARD MEMBER DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND LIABILITIES

Join Attorney Eileen Eakins for a full-day training tailored to special district board members and management staff. Eileen will provide a comprehensive overview of laws and regulations governing Oregon's special districts and the public officials that represent them. It is essential training for newly elected board members and newly appointed management staff, but even experienced individuals will benefit from this training.

**COST: \$75**

- ▶ Aug 2 – Pendleton
- ▶ Aug 9 – Medford
- ▶ Aug 10 – Cottage Grove
- ▶ Aug 15 – Redmond
- ▶ Aug 22 – Newport
- ▶ Aug 23 – Salem



For more information  
including registration,  
please visit:

<https://cvent.me/04Z8Em>  
**\*Discount code: BMDRL23**

\*One Per District | Limited Amount  
First come, First Serve

**Time: 9am-3:30pm**

## BOARD MEMBER RELATIONS, EXPECTATIONS, AND ETHICS

Join Senior Consultant George Dunkel for a training covering board member relations, expectations, and ethics. A cohesive board is key to the success of a special district as well as understanding your expectations as a board member. You will leave this training with the knowledge to have strong relationships on your board and know what is expected of you. George will also cover the rules regarding ethics for public officials and help you navigate situations you may face. Though different from the board member duties, responsibilities, and liabilities training, there may be some slight overlap as topics tend to relate to one another.

**COST: \$75**

- ▶ Sept 12 – Ontario
- ▶ Sept 13 – Boardman
- ▶ Sept 18 – Gold Beach
- ▶ Sept 20 – Klamath Falls
- ▶ Sept 26 – Astoria
- ▶ Sept 27 – Salem



For more information  
including registration,  
please visit:

<https://cvent.me/LnxkyE>  
**Discount code: BMREE23**

\*One Per District | Limited Amount  
First come, First Serve

**Time: 9am-2pm**

# SDAO RISK MANAGEMENT REGIONAL TRAINING SERIES

## REGIONAL TRAINING SERIES

### FROM STORMS TO CLAIMS, HOW TO PREPARE AND PREVENT

Join the SDAO risk management team for an in-depth, interactive session exploring techniques to prevent losses at your district. The scenario based discussion will cover what can be done before, during and after an event to mitigate losses. Additionally, while working through the event we will look at it from a variety of exposures including property, liability and workers' compensation.

We will conclude the session with a roundtable/hot topics conversation. Come prepared to talk about what you are struggling with from a risk management standpoint, what is keeping you up at night, and what resources you need to help manage these risks. This will give each attendee an opportunity to learn from one another about how they are managing similar risks.

### DATES AND LOCATIONS

- **July 12** – Redmond
- **July 13** – Klamath Falls
- **Oct 18** – Medford
- **Oct 19** – Coos Bay
- **Dec 12** – Newport
- **Dec 13** – Salem

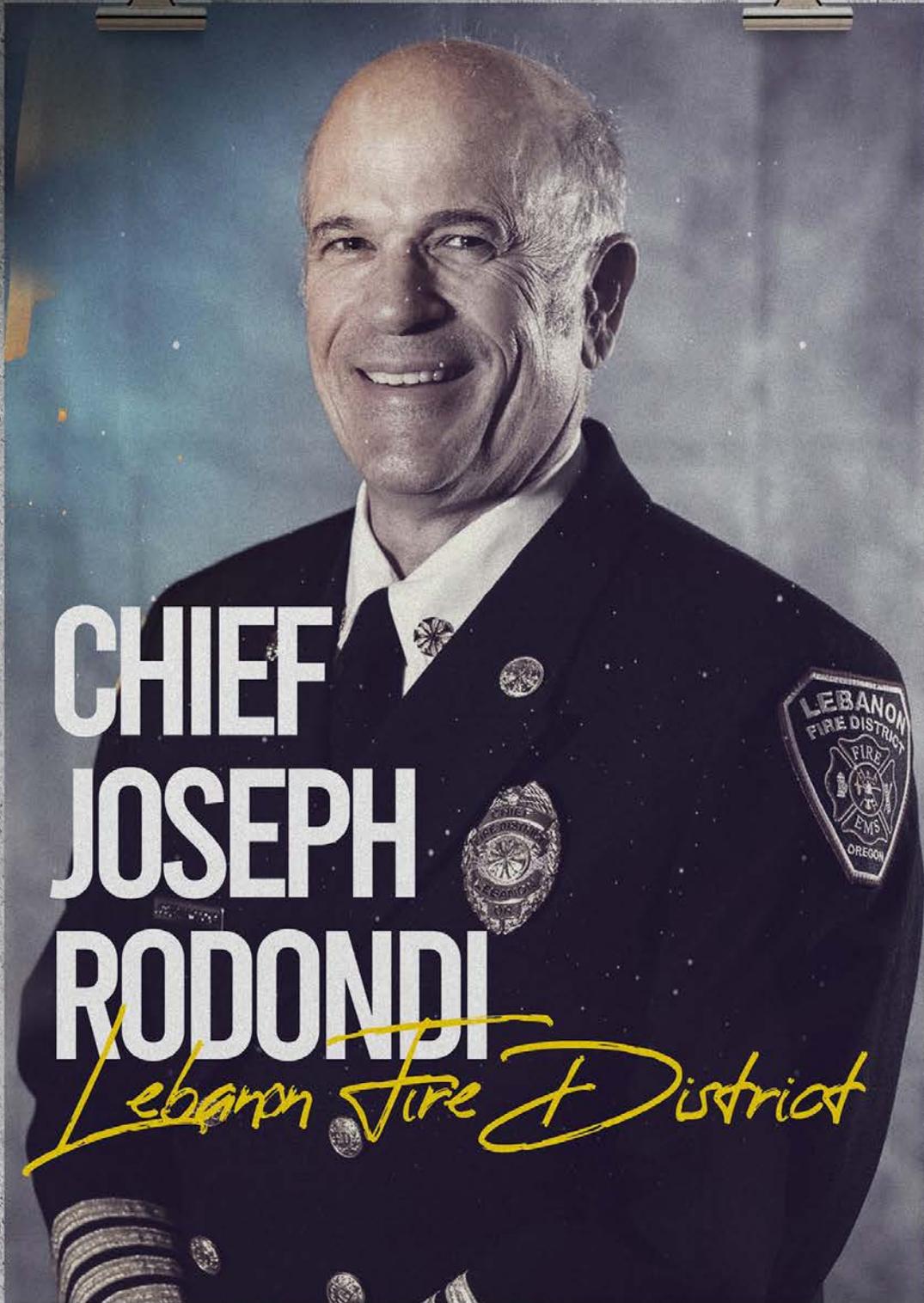
**TIME:** 9am-12pm

### REGISTRATION

\$25 for SDAO members and SDIS agents. Each member district can use code **RMREG23** for one complimentary registration. Discount codes are limited and offered on a first come, first served basis. Visit <https://cvent.me/oxzm3z> to register.



SDAO SPOTLIGHT



**CHIEF  
JOSEPH  
RODONDI**

*Lebanon Fire District*

What is the best kept secret in government? In Oregon, it may be special districts.

There are hundreds of special districts in the state of Oregon facing many challenges in providing their services, especially fire districts. These districts are facing increasing alarms in fire rescue and emergency medical services, difficulties with recruiting and retaining personnel for a variety of reasons, and financial impacts include rising costs of personnel, equipment, materials and supplies.

## **LEBANON FIRE DISTRICT**

The Lebanon Fire Department is a special district with rich and a distinguished history of service to the community since 1884. Currently, the district serves 30,000 people over 134 square miles around the City of Lebanon in Linn County. In addition, their ambulance service area covers 439 square miles including Scio and Brownsville. The district operates five fire stations, two which are staffed with career personnel and three additional volunteer stations. In 2021, the district responded to over 7,200 calls for service.

Leading the Lebanon Fire District is Chief Joseph Rodondi who was appointed to the position in December 2019. Board Chair Robert Taylor has high praise for Chief Rodondi saying, "He is smart, proactive and looks ahead. He solves situations before they become a problem. I have a lot of respect for him."

In an excellent news article by Alex Powers of the Albany Democrat Herald, the difficulties encountered by the district in the past several years are highlighted. These include the pandemic, increased call volume, retention of personnel and the dramatic rise in operating costs.

I had the opportunity to talk with Chief Rodondi about the actions the district has taken to deal with these challenges.

### **Certainly, an increase in call volumes impacts your personnel. How are you dealing with that?**

**CHIEF RODONDI:** It is extremely difficult. The workload, with limited staffing, puts a strain on our firefighters. The workload has increased because of transfers between medical facilities. Larger departments are hiring and offering more pay with less workload. It is extremely attractive for our personnel to consider employment with those departments.

The Lebanon Fire District is a proud combination district. We rely on career firefighters and volunteers from our community for incident response. In 2021, we completed three volunteer firefighter academies and added 25 new volunteer members to our staffing.

### **What actions have you taken to deal with the impact of increased costs?**

**CHIEF RODONDI:** Unfortunately, it is about doing more with less. It is necessary to seek additional revenue sources to support our operation because of Measures 5 and 50. An operating levy is the most viable option for us. The Board has decided to evaluate pursuing an operating levy in May of 2024.

Major issues, for the district, are:

- Making prudent decisions about "What is nice to have" versus "what is necessary to have".
- Maintaining a reserve fund to address maintenance issues which, if are not addressed, will result in more expensive repairs down the road.
- Being more aggressive with our preventative maintenance program to extend the life of our equipment.
- Supporting current and newly hired firefighters to attend paramedic program.

### **How has the Lebanon Fire District managed their volunteer program?**

**CHIEF RODONDI:** The district received the 2022 SDAO Outstanding Program Award for two extremely unique programs: the Alliance with Western University-NW Medical School and Fire Corps.

The Western University - Lebanon Fire Emergency Alliance is a partnership between our District and

the Comp-NW Medical school. Medical students, required to volunteer within their communities to graduate, complete our volunteer firefighter academy, and are fully operational firefighters. This program has been an excellent way for us to provide superior fire protection to our community while providing an opportunity for future doctors to serve their community.

The Fire Corps program is a group of volunteers trained in emotional and practical support. They respond to death calls to provide emotional support for surviving family and friends. They also respond to fire calls to provide rehab services to firefighters and help burn-out victims coordinate with Red Cross services for temporary housing needs.

### **What lessons have you learned from these challenging times?**

**CHIEF RODONDI:** We are seeing the importance of being more aware of politics and proposed legislative issues. This includes being proactive with letter writing campaigns, phone calls and contact with legislators. We need to actively support legislation that is beneficial for special districts.

We have learned the importance of becoming an advocate and forming partnerships with other special districts, associations and influential individuals. Associations include the Oregon Fire Chiefs Association, SDAO, Oregon Fire District Directors Association, and Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association, to name a few.

### **For a new fire chief, what advice do you offer?**

**CHIEF RODONDI:** I came into this position not only as the new fire chief but from another state. It is important to build relationships and establish a support group. Have a 100-day plan. Look where you can have some early wins. Interview and discuss the issues with your firefighters, both career and volunteers and your senior staff and board members.

Start by asking such elementary questions as

- *What are we doing well?*
- *What are we not doing well?*
- *What should we stop doing?*
- *What should we start doing that we are not doing now?*
- *What should we be doing that we have not done?*

## **SUMMARY**

Five takeaways, or lessons learned, that Chief Rodondi shares with other districts:

1. Due to increased alarm volume, rising costs and limitation on revenues, the future is about doing more with less, while striving to not sacrifice quality of service.
2. Build community partnerships and networks. Meet with other local districts. Reach out to the agencies, community groups and influential members in your community.
3. Communicate with your citizens. Get back to basics. Ask questions such as, “What are you doing well”, “What are you not doing well”, etc.
4. Develop a marketing plan using social media and other methods to educate your citizens and ask them what issues they are most concerned about and want addressed.
5. Get involved in the political process. Tell your story. Express your concerns, educate and lobby your elected officials at the local, county, state and federal levels. Work with other districts and associations in a united front.

Special districts – making a positive difference in the community through service to others.

*Providing reasonable, stable rates, and  
broad coverage to Oregon's public entities*

## **SDIS Board of Trustees**

- Chair:** Andrea Klaas, Port of The Dalles
- Vice Chair:** Darren Bucich, McKenzie Fire & Rescue
- Secretary:** David Lindelien, Lane Transit District
- Treasurer:** Stacy Maxwell, Jackson County Fire District 3
- Trustees:** Nicole Dalke, Springfield Utility Board  
Mike Jacobs, Tualatin Valley Water District  
Mark Hokkanen, Tualatin Hills Parks & Recreation District
- Emeritus:** Ted Kunze, Canby Fire District No. 62

## **Services**

- Background Checks
- Claims Administration
- Drug-Free Workplace
- Management Consulting Services
- On-site Loss Control Consultations
- Pre-Loss Legal Services
- Public Safety EAP
- Safety and Security Grant Program
- SDIS Insurance Programs

## **Upcoming Trust Meetings**

**SEPTEMBER 6**  
SDAO Tigard Office | 10:00am

Lately, we have experienced significant losses at our districts attributed to scammers phishing unsuspecting employees. We can't stress enough the importance of being extremely diligent when dealing with requests involving any amount of money.

Here are two scenarios to help you understand examples of what districts have been experiencing:

**SCENARIO ONE** - It's Friday afternoon, you get an email from your supervisor indicating his credit card isn't working, and he needs you to get some gift cards for him to hand out at a community event. You want to help, so you run down to the local store and get the gift cards requested. You reply to the email to let your supervisor know you have them, and he says he needs the numbers off the cards right away. On Monday, you ask your supervisor if everything went ok last Friday with the gift cards and he gives you a blank stare.

**SCENARIO TWO** - You are in the process of building a new building and you get an email from the contractor asking to change the routing number for the next wire transfer. You send it over to accounts payable and the installment payment goes out. Two weeks later you get a "past due" note from the contractor.

First off, your supervisor didn't ask you to get any gift cards, and businesses rarely change routing numbers. These are two scenarios we continue to see where someone has used social engineering to trick an employee into taking some action. In these scenarios, bad actors have electronically impersonated an employee or a business associate to steal funds.

Stop the crime in its tracks. There is a really simple way to stop 100% of these kinds of events from happening. Pick up the phone and verify details from the source. Had someone called on either of the two scenarios, the scam would have been uncovered. Dealing with contractors usually involves large sums of money, and once the funds are transferred, they can be difficult to recover. Don't be another statistic, pick up the phone and call to verify.

For more tips and tricks on cybersecurity, please visit our website at [www.sdao.com/cyber-crime-and-prevention-techniques](http://www.sdao.com/cyber-crime-and-prevention-techniques).





# THE RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS

## A FOUR PART SERIES

The Risk Management Department is excited to announce a series of articles on the risk management process designed just for our members. Each article will help you develop a risk management process for your organization that is easy to understand and explore a different process that will provide information to help reduce your liability and increase the safety of your district.

This series will discuss risk assessments, controls, implementation, and follow-up which will be featured in our quarterly newsletters. We will start things off with risk assessment which will cover who to involve in your assessments, identifying and prioritizing exposures, identifying your risk tolerance and discovering the importance of risk assessments.

### **PART ONE: RISK ASSESSMENT**

If you've ever checked the weather before you went on a camping trip, you've completed a risk assessment. In the simplest of terms, a risk assessment is the process of identifying the potential bad stuff that could happen to your plans. For both camping trips and organizational strategic plans, effective risk assessment can increase the likelihood of everything being efficient, safe, and successful.

#### ***HOW DO I DO A RISK ASSESSMENT?***

All risk assessments will involve identifying risks and assessing them in some way.

## IDENTIFYING RISKS

To ensure you identify as many potential risks as possible, it's essential that you get all the right stakeholders in the room. For a special district, this could include leadership, staff, insurance partners, or agents, but this list is not exhaustive. If you don't have a broad spectrum of stakeholders engaged in your risk identification process, some risks are bound to be missed.

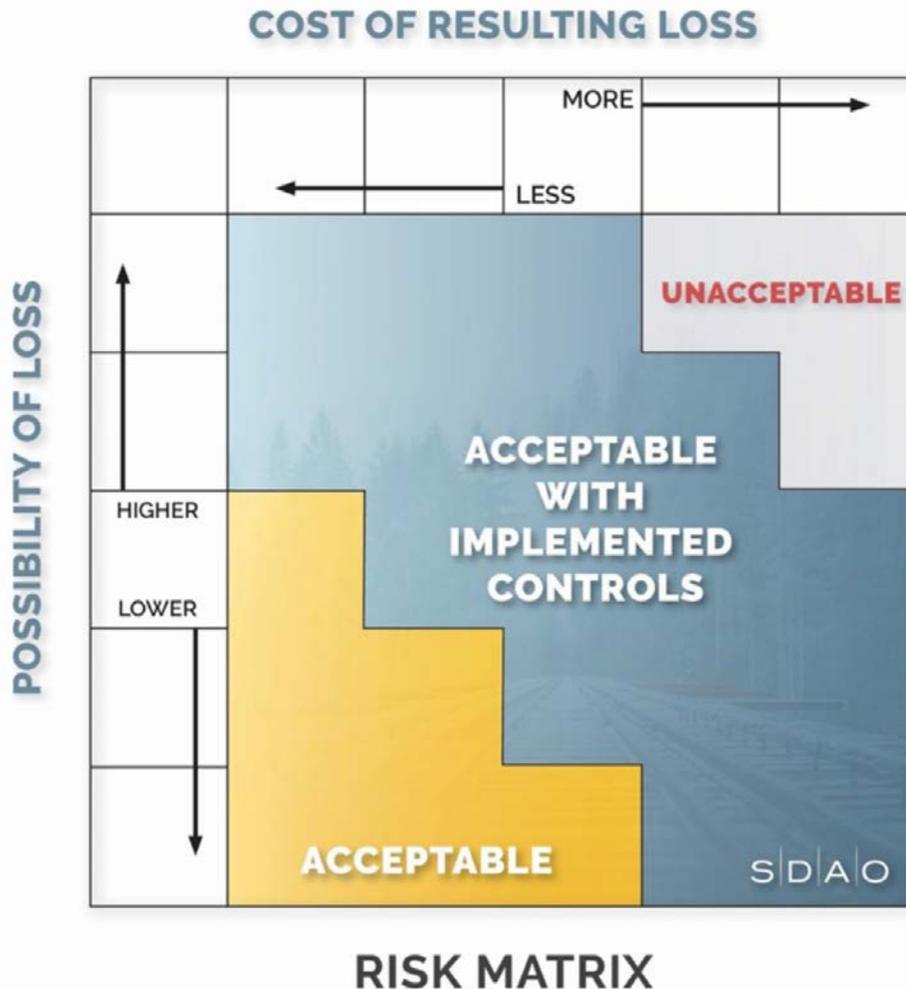
Another gold mine for comprehensive risk identification is your industry. What risks are similar organizations facing? You may find that there are ample resources online that discuss common industry risks. Alternatively, you can reach out to other organizations like yours or professional associations (e.g. OWRC, OAWU, ORPA, OFCA) and see if they would be willing to share their risk assessments.

## ASSESSING RISK

Typically, when we're assessing risks, we want to know their likelihood and severity. In other words, their impact.

Some organizations find it helpful to use a risk matrix. This tool can help you decide how impactful a risk could be, and whether you will choose to tolerate it. Different organizations may accept different levels of risk.

Taking a look at the matrix below, let's imagine that ABC District is assessing their risk of an earthquake. Perhaps they assess that an earthquake is possible and very expensive. Given how impactful an earthquake would be to ABC District, they may decide the risk is "unacceptable" and begin taking actions to remediate the risk.



As can be expected, a risk matrix is particularly helpful with prioritizing risks. It's also purpose-built to help you determine risk impacts that are unique to your organization (for example, tsunamis probably don't make the priority list in eastern Oregon).

## COMPLETING YOUR **RISK ASSESSMENT**

Once you've identified and evaluated your risks, your assessment is complete and you're ready for the next step in the risk management process – risk controls. We'll be discussing risk controls in the next newsletter, so stay tuned.

Need assistance with your risk assessment process? Consider scheduling a voluntary risk management consultation with one of our risk management consultants. We can walk your facilities with you and help guide you through the risk assessment process.

Reach out to [riskmanagement@sdao.com](mailto:riskmanagement@sdao.com) to schedule your consultation today. This service is provided free of charge to all members enrolled in the SDIS property/casualty insurance program.

## **UPCOMING ARTICLES**

Be sure to watch for our next newsletters which will continue covering the risk management process series.

### 2023 **FALL NEWSLETTER**

Our controls topic will take into consideration that you identified concerns during the risk assessment and will review four options for putting risk controls in place to help mitigate exposures.

### 2024 **WINTER NEWSLETTER**

Implementation will address areas such as creating plans, implementing the plan, and ideas on how to analyze, reevaluate and assess to ensure effectiveness.

### 2024 **SPRING NEWSLETTER**

Follow-up will address the importance of following up on areas identified for improvement and will provide some ideas and best practices of how to do it effectively.



# INCORPORATING GRATITUDE INTO YOUR CULTURE

BY: HR ANSWERS

At its core, gratitude is appreciating your surroundings. Take it one step further – it is mindfully being aware of the positive aspects of life along with the people, factors, decisions, and environments that led to them.

Practicing gratitude can be a powerful strategy that can propel your organization's growth upward. When you express gratitude for the work your teams (and individuals) put in, you create an experience for them that leads to the belief that their contributions matter. This means simply recognizing and communicating what you're genuinely grateful for.

When you practice gratitude, you are consciously focusing on the positives in your life. Research suggests if you do this consistently, it rewires your brain to notice more positive elements of your life, subconsciously. This actually leads to increased happiness. In turn, gratitude is important because it neutralizes our negativity bias.

Gratitude is important because everyone wants to be appreciated. Yet University of California, Berkeley research shows people are least likely to express gratitude in the workplace. This creates a gap between what your employees want and what your organization delivers. In turn, employees may leave to find another organization that can fulfill their need to feel appreciated.

Gratitude is central to giving appreciative feedback, which is showing appreciation to your colleagues and what they bring to

the organization. This includes their work, skills, effort, and personal qualities. Giving appreciative feedback keeps your people motivated, positive and engaged.

Appreciative feedback can be demonstrated in many ways, both big and small. Examples include:

- A manager dedicates a portion of a department meeting to recognize the team's efforts for a major project
- HR formalizes a monthly focused recognition program that honors exceptional performance
- An employee thanks the team for covering for them while they were on vacation
- Employees thanking executives' responsible actions during a time of crisis

These gestures will have a positive impact on your culture because gratitude is contagious. When you express gratitude to a colleague, it motivates them to reciprocate that behavior to you or others. This creates a chain reaction, which makes gratitude integral to your culture. Research shows that gratitude is strongly tied to greater happiness and positivity, which are key indicators of a strong culture.

It is easy to see some key benefits and ROI of gratitude within your organization when it is practiced.

- Increased employee motivation and engagement. This means appreciation and recognition are at play by all.
- Frequent displays of empathy. Not only recognize someone's action but also the effort behind it. It is important to see things from someone else's shoes.
- Encourage your people to help. Motivating others to lend a hand. In fact, a University of California, Riverside study found that people who received kindness not only reported higher levels of happiness and a better sense of camaraderie but were also motivated to help others.

- Promotes mental well-being. Research suggests that gratitude can lead to many mental health benefits: better sleep, less anxiety, improved stress management, and more. Healthy employees are key to a successful organization.

So, what can you do to bring more gratitude to your organization and make it more of a daily practice?

- Start meetings with gratitude. The meeting could start with a simple question: “What are you grateful for today?” Starting with gratitude sets a positive tone for the rest of the meeting.
- Recognize employees on a regular basis. Focused recognition should be done throughout the year. Examples include an employee spotlight in your company newsletter, encouraging shout-outs during meetings, or organizing outings to celebrate hard work. The recognition should focus on behaviors that reinforce your core values and create the culture you hope to build.
- Say “thank you.” These two simple words can go a long way. A survey conducted by Reward Gateway revealed that 75% of U.S. employees said that if managers thanked them in real-time, motivation and morale would improve. Believe it or not a written ‘thank you’ note is still effective. People value these notes because of the extra time and effort it took to write them.
- Encourage rest after hard work. This signals to your employees that you not only recognize their hard work but also care about their well-being.

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# NEED HELP?

## MEET TONYA!



Running a special district isn't easy. Oftentimes, you get presented with random questions like can I hold a last-minute executive session? By statute, how many board members can our district have? Can

I have a husband and wife serve on my board? Oftentimes, you can easily hop on your computer or mobile device and find the answer you are looking for from a quick Google search. But sometimes, what you need to know has more nuances than a simple online search.

As an SDAO member, you have access to a wide variety of resources and benefits. One of these amazing member benefits is our research and technical assistance program administered by Tonya Grass, our Legal and Technical Support Administrator. When you need more information about something or just some clarity about a topic, reach out to Tonya; she will point you in the right direction.

For help with all things special districts, email **Tonya at [help@sdao.com](mailto:help@sdao.com)**.

# NEW COURSES ON YOUR VECTOR SOLUTIONS TRAINING PLATFORM

Special Districts Insurance Services (SDIS) has sponsored new tools to help members maintain a fair and inclusive work environment for everyone, which benefits and strengthens your entire organization. Below are course descriptions to a suite of diversity, equity, and inclusion titles from Vector Solutions. These are provided by SDIS to you at no cost to your special district—a savings of over \$1,800 annually.

## **AWARENESS**

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Awareness for Employees  
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Awareness for Managers

These courses are designed to give an overview of the fundamental aspects of diversity, equity and inclusion and how they bring value to the workplace. Topics covered include how certain policies and practices have historically undermined these concepts; how discrimination and harassment continue to play a part in today's professional landscape; challenges faced by those in the LGBTQ community; and implicit bias and the destructiveness of microaggressions.

## **SKILLS**

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Skills for Employees  
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Skills for Managers

These courses are designed to show how everyone can make the workplace both fair and welcoming to those who have historically faced discrimination for any one aspect of their identity. Topics covered include barriers to an inclusive work environment and actionable steps to foster inclusion in the workplace.

You can find these new courses on your training website. Though these are not required to be taken by SDAO or SDIS, they do qualify for credit under the Board Leadership Academy and Fire District Directors Academy for Cultural Diversity.

If you have any questions,  
please reach out to SDAO at  
[\*\*memberservices@sdao.com\*\*](mailto:memberservices@sdao.com).



# SDIS Offers No-Cost Online Risk Management Training to Members

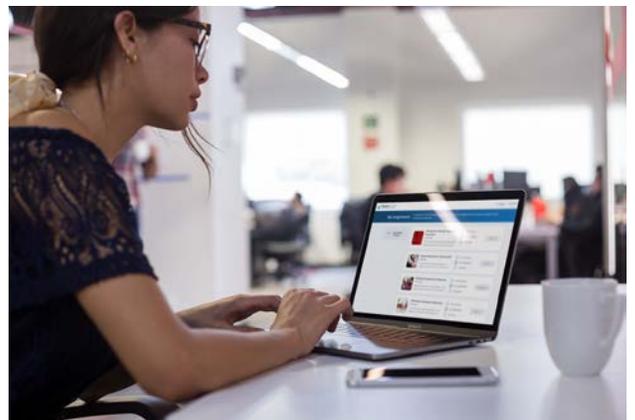
As part of SDIS's ongoing commitment to safety, compliance with regulatory requirements, and containing healthcare costs, SDIS has partnered with Vector Solutions (formerly SafePersonnel) to provide a series of free online risk management trainings.

SDAO members enrolled in the SDIS Property/Casualty program can complete safety and liability trainings through the Vector Solutions (formerly SafePersonnel) online training system at no charge.

**S | D | I | S** Special Districts  
Insurance Services

## Automated Features Make Administration Easy

- This extensive library of trainings is accessible to each district through a personalized website set up by Vector Solutions.
- Set up personalized training plans in minutes for groups of staff, new hires, or individuals.
- Keep everyone on track with email notifications and reminders of assignments.
- Track course completions in real-time.
- Receive compliance reports directly in your inbox.



***Don't have a training site set up? Reach out to SDAO Member Services at [memberservices@sdao.com](mailto:memberservices@sdao.com) to get started!***



# How to Report a New Work Injury to SAIF

As of July 1, 2023, all workers' compensation claims, with dates of injury from July 1, 2023, forward, will be handled by SAIF.

SAIF offers several ways for districts to report a work injury and establish a workers' compensation claim for their injured employee:

## **ONLINE**

Districts can provide all information by logging into the SAIF portal at [www.saif.com](http://www.saif.com)

## **EMAIL**

The completed First Report of Injury, Form 801, can be emailed to [saif801@saif.com](mailto:saif801@saif.com)

## **FAX**

The completed First Report of Injury, Form 801, can be sent by facsimile to 800-475-7785

## **TELEPHONE**

Districts can provide all information telephonically by calling 888-373-8689

## **REGULAR MAIL**

The completed First Report of Injury, Form 801, can be sent by USPS to:

**SAIF, 400 HIGH ST SE, SALEM, OR 97312**

SAIF also provides an online training video which demonstrates the process for filing a workers' compensation claim at:

**<https://www.saif.com/employer-guide/filing-and-managing-a-claim.html>**

As a reminder, any date of injury prior to July 1, 2023, should be reported to SDAO.

If you have any questions on how to file a claim with SAIF, you may contact them directly or contact the SDAO Workers' Compensation Claims Department at **503-670-7066**.

**saif**  
Work. Life. Oregon.

# MEMBER CALENDAR

<b>JULY 3</b>	Registration Opens for SDAO Member Scholarship Golf Tournament
<b>JULY 4</b>	Independence Day: SDAO Closed
<b>JULY 6</b>	First Thursday Webinar
<b>JULY 12</b>	SDAO Risk Management Regional Training: Redmond
<b>JULY 13</b>	SDAO Risk Management Regional Training: Klamath Falls
<b>AUGUST 2</b>	SDAO Board Member Duties, Liabilities, and Responsibilities Training: Pendleton
<b>AUGUST 3</b>	First Thursday Webinar
<b>AUGUST 9</b>	SDAO Board Member Duties, Liabilities, and Responsibilities Training: Medford
<b>AUGUST 10</b>	SDAO Board Member Duties, Liabilities, and Responsibilities Training: Cottage Grove
<b>AUGUST 15</b>	SDAO Board Member Duties, Liabilities, and Responsibilities Training: Redmond
<b>AUGUST 22</b>	SDAO Board Member Duties, Liabilities, and Responsibilities Training: Newport
<b>AUGUST 23</b>	SDAO Board Member Duties, Liabilities, and Responsibilities Training: Salem
<b>SEPTEMBER 4</b>	Labor Day: SDAO Closed
<b>SEPTEMBER 6</b>	SDIS Board of Trustees Meeting: Tigard
<b>SEPTEMBER 7</b>	First Thursday Webinar
<b>SEPTEMBER 12</b>	SDAO Board Member Relations, Expectations, and Ethics Training: Ontario
<b>SEPTEMBER 13</b>	SDAO Board Member Relations, Expectations, and Ethics Training: Boardman
<b>SEPTEMBER 14</b>	SDAO Board of Directors Meeting: Salem
<b>SEPTEMBER 15</b>	Member Appreciation Golf Tournament
<b>SEPTEMBER 18</b>	SDAO Board Member Relations, Expectations, and Ethics Training: Gold Beach
<b>SEPTEMBER 20</b>	SDAO Board Member Relations, Expectations, and Ethics Training: Klamath Falls
<b>SEPTEMBER 26</b>	SDAO Board Member Relations, Expectations, and Ethics Training: Astoria
<b>SEPTEMBER 27</b>	SDAO Board Member Relations, Expectations, and Ethics Training: Salem

Download this newsletter online at <https://sdaoresourcelibrary.com/newsletters>





# EAP INTAKE PROCEDURES

EAP telephonic counseling services include assessment, triage, in the moment support, stabilization as needed, and referrals as requested or required based on severity of presentation.

Our telephonic counselors listen to understand the presenting problem and contributing factors. Many members benefit from the ability to access our phone counselors for support.

## **EAP INTAKE CALLS:**

- Confidential
- 24/7 telephonic access to our master's level counselors for employees in need of immediate support/intervention
- Access to our network of providers who can provide ongoing individual face-to-face EAP sessions as well as in the moment support as appropriate

## **REFERRAL PROCESS:**

- Referrals are made within our network of local counselors
- Criteria considerations for a referral match include:
  - » Availability for a first appointment
  - » Empaneled in the employee's health insurance for continued care after EAP sessions
  - » Comfort and expertise with the presenting issue for the referral



*Members who present at imminent risk are referred to local crisis services when appropriate or 911.*

**[www.PublicSafetyEAP.com](http://www.PublicSafetyEAP.com)**  
**1-888-327-1060**



# CYBERSECURITY

## What is it?

Cybercrime is an ever-growing issue in today's business, and you need to be aware of it. It is not a matter of if it will happen, but when. While organizations scramble to perform thorough cybersecurity risk assessments, cybercriminals continue to exploit our vulnerabilities by aggressively outpacing our updates, patches, and firewalls. A 2021 study (Fox, 2022) identified an 11% increase in security breaches since 2018 and a 67% increase since 2014. In 2020, there were over 240,000 cybercrime victims from phishing alone (FBI, 2020) – that's without factoring in ransomware, identity theft, or personal data breaches! Additionally, in Oregon, cybercrime-related losses cost over \$38 million in 2020 (FBI, 2020). Are your cyber defenses ready?

## Is our organization really at risk of a cybersecurity attack?

Two of the biggest cybersecurity risks are ransomware and email fraud/phishing.



## Consider asking yourself the following questions:

1. Do staff need an administrator password or privileged access to download apps and computer programs?
2. Are all organization-owned computers password protected?
3. If all organizational data was wiped or stolen today, are backups available?
4. Would your staff be able to recognize a phishing email if they saw one?
5. Are staff required to make strong passwords, and are these passwords set to expire?
6. If an employee's work laptop was lost or stolen, would organizational data be secure?

If you answered "no" to any of these questions, your organization is at an increased risk of a cybersecurity attack. Fortunately, there are many steps you can take to improve your cybersecurity practices.

## How can we improve our organization's cybersecurity?

Here are several examples of actions you can take to secure your organization:

1. Create a secure foundation (examples: data back-up, password management, multi-factor authentication)
2. Limit administrative rights to only the IT department staff (examples: administration, district manager, IT staff)
3. Establish organizational policies (examples: acceptable use agreements)
4. Conduct cybersecurity awareness training (examples: cybersecurity training, email phishing exercises)
5. Secure your valuables (examples: accounting for deployed tech items, regular system updates, securing remote workers).
6. Plan for emergencies (examples: create an incident response plan, run tabletop exercises)
7. Proactive prevention (examples: 24/7 security detection, threat hunting)

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) announced the establishment of the [Ransomware Vulnerability Warning Pilot](#) (RVWP) as authorized by the Cyber Incident Reporting for Critical Infrastructure Act ([CIRCIA](#)) of 2022. Through the RVWP, CISA will determine vulnerabilities commonly associated with known ransomware exploitation and warn critical infrastructure entities of those vulnerabilities, enabling mitigation before a ransomware incident occurs.

Organizations across all sectors and of all sizes are too frequently impacted by damaging ransomware incidents often perpetrated by cyber threat actors using known vulnerabilities. By urgently fixing these vulnerabilities, organizations can significantly reduce their likelihood of experience a ransomware event. However, most organizations may be unaware that a vulnerability used by ransomware threat actors is present on their network.

The RVWP will identify organizations with internet-accessible vulnerabilities commonly associated with known ransomware actors by using existing services, data sources, technologies, and authorities, including our free [Cyber Hygiene Vulnerability Scanning](#) service. CISA notifications will contain key information regarding the vulnerable system, such as the manufacturer and model of the device, the IP address in use, how CISA detected the vulnerability, and guidance on how the vulnerability should be mitigated.

For more information on [RVWP](#) and other available resources for ransomware protection, detection, and response, all organizations are encouraged to visit [StopRansomware.gov](#), a whole-of-government approach for ransomware resources and alerts.

Organizations interested with enrolling in CISA's Cyber Hygiene Vulnerability Scanning – contact [vulnerability@cisa.dhs.gov](mailto:vulnerability@cisa.dhs.gov)

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Risk Management Department at 800-285-5461 or [riskmanagement@sdao.com](mailto:riskmanagement@sdao.com).

Administered by Special Districts Association of Oregon  
Toll-Free: 800-285-5461 | Phone: 503-371-8667  
Email: [sdao@sdao.com](mailto:sdao@sdao.com)  
[www.sdao.com](http://www.sdao.com)

# SUNSHINE + EMERGENCY PREPARATION

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## SAVINGS ON YOUR DISTRICT'S INSURANCE

By: Jaime Keeling, Underwriter

It's that time of year when the sun comes out and starts to stay out - finally! Some of us get that itch to start cleaning and organizing things, mostly in preparation to spend more time outside in the gorgeous PacNW! This is a great time of year to start to plan and look towards the upcoming months that will start the new year.

As we have witnessed over the last few years, there have been some major traumatic natural events in our beautiful state - from freezing ice storms to crazy hailstorms and multiple catastrophic wildfires that caused massive destruction and devastation across Oregon.

These events are forefront in our minds and our business, as they affect everything from claims, to risk management, to even the underwriting of your policies and working with the reinsurers around the world. With that thought in mind, this year when we planned for our Best Practices Program, we focused our topic of interest on emergency preparedness and how we can help support and facilitate effective planning and education for our members.

Our Best Practices Program can allow your district to receive up to a 10% possible discount on the annual general liability, auto liability and property insurance premium contributions. This can be huge savings to many of our districts! We also try to make it easy to obtain the credits to be earned.

We offer a variety of ideas to help prepare your district ahead of an emergency, potentially to help alleviate some of the stress and the unknown that can come when disasters happen.

A plan, specifically an Emergency Preparedness Plan, that is adopted by your district is the first step in the right direction. This plan will help your district in the event of needing to act immediately and have everyone, staff or volunteer(s), to be trained to respond accordingly. We have checklist questions to inspire and lead your district into planning ahead for things like communication response; what will we do if we lose power or need to be evacuated? How will our district function if our office is damaged or closed?

We have also supplied two great online video options to review about facilitating an emergency action plan and how to prepare and respond before, during and after a disaster strikes.

The Best Practices Survey opened recently on the Insurance Site, so members can now start recording their answers for credit. This survey can be accessed multiple times, answers can be changed and recorded as needed.

To learn more about the various credit opportunities, please visit [www.sdao.com/best-practices-program](http://www.sdao.com/best-practices-program). To access the survey, please log in at [www.sdis.org](http://www.sdis.org).

If you have any questions about the Best Practices Program, please feel free to reach out to:

**Jaime Keeling at [jkeeling@sdao.com](mailto:jkeeling@sdao.com).**



# WORKPLACE WELLNESS

Provided by The Partners Group



## FAQs about Wellness Programs

When you are considering implementing a workplace wellness program, you may have a lot of questions. Below are some answers to frequently asked questions about wellness initiatives.

### *We can't do a comprehensive program right now, but is it still worth doing something?*

Absolutely—even a small activity can plant the seeds of success for your program to grow. Engage in some low-cost activities, like providing a health and wellness bulletin board or newsletter. You can also coordinate walking groups or encourage managers to hold walking meetings when it is nice outside. These small steps can promote a healthier workplace.

### *There is so much we could do in our program. Where do we start?*

After you have secured management support, researching the health needs of your employees is the best way to identify which activities will resonate most with your employees. Make sure the first programs you develop are fun and interactive, because they will be the first impression that employees get of your wellness program. Start with programs that have broad appeal instead of those that might only be of interest to a smaller, more targeted group. In addition, because there are many regulations governing workplace wellness programs, make sure to review legal considerations or consult with legal counsel before implementing a wellness program.

### *We have tried health and lifestyle programs but participation is small. What can we do?*

Keep trying, and be patient. It will take some time for your program to get going. Remember that, ultimately, you are trying to change workplace culture, and change is a process that happens slowly over time.

One approach that has proven successful for employers, though, is to offer incentives for participation or attendance. For instance, you could offer free healthy snacks if employees



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attend a wellness meeting. Another approach is to invite people in the organization who are well-liked and respected to participate in your program in the hopes that it will encourage other employees to join as well.

***We have a lot of work to do in the area of nutrition. How can we avoid getting the reputation of being the “food police”?***

In educational sessions, talk about the health issues around fats, added sugars and portion sizes, but avoid demonizing unhealthy foods. If people feel like they are being attacked for their lifestyle habits, they may be reluctant to participate in future wellness initiatives.

Instead, empower employees by teaching them the benefits of healthy eating and the positive impact it can have on their life (more energy, better sleep, etc.). Encourage employees to add more healthy foods to their diets and make healthy foods available at work to encourage employees to grab an apple rather than buy a candy bar out of the vending machine. As employees begin to eat healthier, they will notice how unhealthy foods make them feel sluggish, and they will begin to avoid them on their own.

***CEO and leadership support is important, but they will probably never come to lunch-and-learns or walking groups. How can we show their support to employees?***

Some of the best support management can provide is HR and financial resources for the program. Endorsing a policy change that supports wellness is another important type of high level support. In addition, you can plan a program kick-off and have leadership visibly present and participating. Get the event on their calendars early, or ask leadership to write a short email or intranet post that demonstrates their excitement about the wellness initiative.

***Some employees are suspicious about the motives of the program. What can we do about it?***

Employees may be hesitant to share their health information and participate in wellness activities because they may feel like employers shouldn't be monitoring their health. Wellness programs may also cause unhealthy employees to become nervous about their job security, especially if your company has recently gone through downsizing.

The most important thing you can do to curtail suspicion is to encourage honest, open communication. Tell your employees not only what you are planning, but also **why** you are doing it. Discuss the benefits of wellness programs for the company and for the employees. You can mention the high cost of health care as an incentive for creating the program, but also talk about how you value your employees' well-being and want to equip them with the resources to live healthy lives. Reassure them that their personal health information will be protected and only used for wellness purposes.

Source: Wisconsin Worksite Wellness Resource Kit

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