



# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

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## LMCIT SERVES MEMBER CITIES THROUGH REGIONAL SAFETY GROUPS

BY CLAIRE BUCHWALD

The League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT) developed the RSG (Regional Safety Group) initiative to help small cities get the training and support they need to meet OSHA standards in a cost-effective way that is tailored to their specific needs. "Creating and maintaining policies, coordinating required training, and constantly working to monitor and improve your city's safety record is no small task! This program makes it easy to participate in a safety committee that complies with the state and federal Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) and meets a city's needs. Participation in an RSG is a practical and affordable way for smaller cities to get organized and stay on top of their mandated safety programs and policies."

Cities can join or form an RSG if they have fewer than 50 full-time employees and carry LMCIT's workers' compensation coverage. Cities in an RSG take turns hosting training and safety consultations for the group. They hold 6-12 meetings a year with the risk pool bearing over half of the costs. RSG members share a Regional Safety Coordinator who provides the safety training and gives the host city 4 additional hours a month of "value-added" training time. These regional safety trainings save travel time and expenses too since training is delivered in each city's region.

Possible topics for trainings ("value-added time") include:

- Mock OSHA inspection/audit
- Safety Policy review and evaluation
- Employee Training Audit
- Research and assistance with safety tools & equipment
- OSHA Safety Grant recommendation and assistance
- Federal OSHA and MNOSHA Standards interpretation
- Respiratory Fit Testing
- Personal Protective Equipment Assessment
- OSHA 300 Log assistance
- Ride along – on-the-spot job training
- Independent Contractor work observations
- Attending a city specific safety committee meeting

Members also receive free access to NeoGov Online Safety Training program, featuring more than 200 NeoGov courses and a Safety Data Management System (powered by Damarco Solutions) with 24/7 access.

LMCIT has been offering the RSG program since 2005. They currently support 33 RSGs throughout Minnesota, involving 199 cities. Most of the cities involved do not have budgets for safety contracts, which used to result in lack of training, unsafe working conditions, and OSHA fines. The RSG program is a perfect example of local government collaboration. With LMCIT's support, these small cities can group together to get the OSHA and safety training that they need.

LMCIT Program Manager Kristen LeRoy explains, "Because the member cities have very few employees, I try to keep any/all travel distance for their training to about 30 minutes, so, if necessary, they can get back to their city to assist with the problem at hand." Ms. LeRoy also makes sure that the safety coordinators/trainers at the RSGs understand the needs and limitations of small cities. This understanding makes their training and safety recommendations relevant and useful to RSG members.

During COVID, while fewer in-person trainings were available to cities, LMCIT did not charge the RSGs. The program's safety coordinators referenced training videos from NeoGov, so that RSG member cities could remain OSHA compliant.

Ms. LeRoy said, "In the year prior to the COVID closings, we added four new RSGs. We will resume work with them when it is safe to hold in-person introductory meetings. Normally, when a city is interested in forming an RSG for cities in their area, I send out invitations to the surrounding cities and welcome them, their staff, and city council members to join me in an informational meeting. This way they can hear from their potential trainer, ask questions, and leave understanding the need for safety training and how they can do it affordably. It is very helpful to have city council members at this meeting as their approval is required."

The tremendous value of LMCIT's RSG program is summed up in this quote from one grateful participant: "We are a small city with only 3 employees, and we do not have a budget that can take on a Safety Contract. Prior to joining the Regional Safety Group, we had absolutely no training and we did not have a Safety Manual. Ultimately, we had to pay some very expensive OSHA fines. Thanks for making [the RSG program] a great option for us and our surrounding cities."

*This article was written with the assistance of Kristen LeRoy, LMCIT Program Manager, who manages this program. Kristen invites other NLC-RISC member pools to visit [LMCIT's website](http://www.lmc.org) [www.lmc.org and search Regional Safety Groups] or contact her by email at: kleroy@lmc.org or by phone at: 651-281-1268] for further information.*