



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

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TMLIRP TAKES ON ROADWAY HAZARDS IN THEIR R.O.A.D. READY INITIATIVE

Based on materials created by the Loss Prevention team at TMLIRP

Have you ever sat back and considered how much local government work is conducted on or near roadways? The breeze created by vehicles zooming past sure feels good in the summer heat, but the exposures for those employees near the roadway range from minor injuries to fatalities. There is also a vast array of potential liability exposures for your organization created by those activities.

While we all understand that working on roadways or operating vehicles is inherently dangerous, the Texas Municipal League Intergovernmental Risk Pool (TMLIRP) discovered that about 33% of the Risk Pool's losses occurring on or near roadways have nothing to do with auto-related coverages. Rather, those losses stem from incidents resulting in claims and losses in workers' compensation, general liability, and other associated lines. For example, in addition to public safety operations such as police, fire, or emergency medical services, work on or near roadways involves public works, code enforcement, parks & recreation, meter readers, animal control, and all kinds of utility activities. Some of this work is performed on perfect sunny days, but roadwork is also done during nighttime, fog, rain, snow or ice, and a host of other low-visibility conditions. Of course some of the biggest exposures of all, are the actions of other drivers, including distracted or potentially impaired drivers operating vehicles within a few feet of where your employees are positioned with little to protect them.

TMLIRP has created the R.O.A.D. Ready initiative to raise awareness of these exposures. This effort is much more than a training program on safe driving. It is a cooperative process to raise awareness of all exposures near roadways. The pool is working with local governmental entities to assure that there are resources to address these exposures.

TMLIRP started the program in January, 2022. Exposures and hazards being targeted in the first year of *R.O.A.D. Ready* include:

- Debris Removal
- High-Visibility Clothing
- Runover or Backover Incident Prevention
- Work Zone Safety
- Vehicle Operations & Traffic Safety

These are in addition to the usual list of exposures and hazards associated with driving, such as defensive driving, distracted driving, road rage, aggressive driving, vehicle inspections and maintenance, emergency driving, backing, intersections, etc.

Overall, the pool's initiative is designed to help city departments and workers think critically about risk management on and around roadways so that they do the following:

Recognize the hazards.

Before employees hit the road, ensure everyone is aware of potential hazards. Hazards include but are not limited to being struck by moving vehicles or equipment. A short safety meeting before working near any roadway will help in recognizing exposures.

Observe people, processes, and equipment.

By understanding the big picture, employees can be aware of where people are working, what types of activities are being conducted, and potential risks involved with work near roadways.

Assess the risk level.

Are employees working in an open, or partially open, travel lane? Are positive protection devices, such as vehicles or attenuators, in place? Has a protective work zone been created? Are employees facing the direction of traffic as much as possible to detect oncoming hazards?

Determine the safest course of action.

Proactive planning can help identify what safety precautions should be put in place. Things such as positive protection, attenuators, or channelizing devices can help keep employees safe. Simply wearing a vest or putting up flags or signage can direct attention to your employees present near the roadway.

If you want to learn more about TMLIRP's R.O.A.D. Ready initiative, you can contact Irvin Janak, ijanak@tmlirp.org. More information about the program can also be found at: <https://info.tmlirp.org/road-ready>.