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# THE ALLIANCE ADVISOR

OCTOBER 2023

## FEATURED

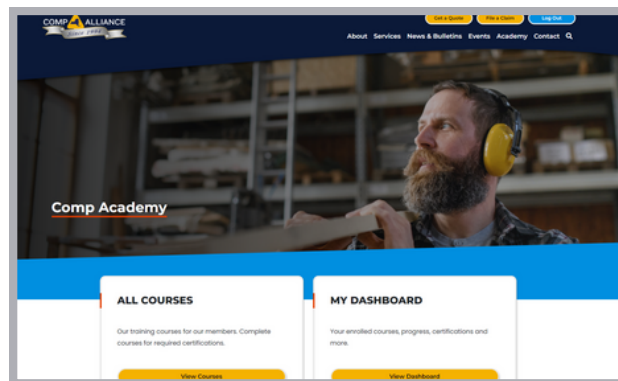
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## FOLLOW US



## New, Improved Website & Comp Academy

After months of hard work, we are thrilled to unveil the new Comp Alliance website and Comp Academy. Stay up-to-date on our upcoming trainings with the revamped Events page. Search for specific keywords and locations, filter by date, event type, or category, and easily register for training sessions. Check our For Members section for access to members-only documents, the Safety Source login page, and the claim reporting portal. Use categories on the News & Bulletins page to find tailored resources and even search the website for specific keywords.



Members must re-register for the all-new Comp Academy. Please reach out to [compalliancemarketing@wrightinsurance.com](mailto:compalliancemarketing@wrightinsurance.com) with a list of emails you would like to register. We will approve the emails and follow up with you with a registration link. The Comp Academy gives users access to online training like Workplace Violence, Bloodborne Pathogens, Right-to-Know, and many more public entity-focused safety training courses. It also provides access to past safety bulletins, newsletters, and additional safety resources. Please reach out with any questions or concerns.

## Safe Workplace & Loyalty Award Distribution

Eligible members on our January cycle will receive a Safe Workplace Award over the next few weeks. The monetary award recognizes our members' efforts to maintain a healthy and safe workplace, as evidenced by a positive loss experience, while incentivizing all members to improve workplace conditions and minimize workplace injuries. Together with our Loyalty Award program, every member of the Comp Alliance shares in our success as we continue to improve safety for municipal and school employees throughout New York State. The Comp Alliance recently distributed Loyalty Awards to eligible members on our June and July cycles. Members as of January 1, 2024 should expect to receive a Loyalty award this winter.



## Verbal De-Escalation Techniques

Municipal employees face many challenges while completing daily job functions, with many involving interactions with the public. Occasionally, these dealings can become hostile if appropriate verbal communication or control techniques are not properly utilized.

De-escalation is the use of communication, or other technologies and techniques, during an encounter to stabilize, slow, or reduce the intensity of a potentially violent situation using no physical force or reduced force. Verbal de-escalation is the first line of defense in preventing situations from escalating to physical altercations.

Verbal de-escalation is the combination of tone, volume, rate of speech, and inflection in voice to positively control stress before it escalates to anger or combativeness.



**Tone:** Speak calmly to demonstrate empathy.



**Volume:** Monitor your volume and avoid raising your voice.



**Rate of Speech:** Slower speech can be more soothing.



**Inflection:** Be aware of emphasizing words or syllables that can negatively affect the situation. ➔

## Verbal De-Escalation Techniques (cont.)

*Instead of saying:*

*Try:*

"Calm down!"



"I can see that you are upset."

"I can't help you."



"I want to help you. What can I do?"

"I know how you feel."



"I understand that you feel..."

"Come with me."



"May I speak with you over here?"

Verbal de-escalation attempts to reach a reasonable conclusion, preferably for both parties, that avoids a physical encounter. The cycle of assault can provide additional information on how this is possible by exploring the process of anger and how it can lead to physical assault if not controlled positively.

Levels of Assault:

### Stress

De-escalation works best to mitigate at this initial level of crisis

### Anger

Hostilities escalate, change your de-escalation strategy

### Combat

Physical intervention is most likely. Get help and remove yourself.



## Verbal De-Escalation Techniques (cont.)

Practice positive techniques for de-escalation during the Stress level using the mnemonic HEART.

**H** Use your **heart** and practice active listening. Pay attention, give your undivided attention, and provide positive feedback.

**E** Empathize. Show caring and let the person know you understand.

**A** Apologize for the situation and how they are feeling.

**R** Respond positively and provide tangible action for their situation.

**T** Thank them for bringing the situation to your attention and allowing you to make it right.

Use these additional techniques for de-escalation in the workplace. Such techniques are useful for handling many different situations involving the public, a coworker, a board meeting, field staff, third-party disagreements, or even First Amendment audit conflicts.

- Respect personal space
- Use a barrier, like a countertop bank-teller window, to protect employees.
- Maintain eye contact and stay at the same eye level.
- Keep your tone and body language neutral and positive, never negative.
- Avoid overreaction – stay calm and professional.
- Focus on thoughts and problems, not the person.
- Don't take it personally.
- Keep yourself safe and protect others nearby.
- Move conversation to a private area but stay near coworkers.
- Avoid being alone.
- Ignore challenging questions.
- Utilize the rule of strength in numbers.
- Consider technology such as surveillance cameras and panic buttons.

When even the best attempts at de-escalation don't address the stress and anger of others and potential combat is nearing, consider removing yourself from the scene. This could mean finding an escape location or exiting the building. Consider getting help from a coworker or turning the conversation over to them completely. Contact law enforcement if you feel it is necessary to protect yourself and others from physical harm. ➡

## Verbal De-Escalation Techniques (cont.)

Practicing positive de-escalation techniques can go a long way in providing a safer workplace when inevitable conflicts arise. Consider additional training resources like your local police department or Safety Source Online, the Comp Alliance safety training resource. Police officers are experts at conflict resolution through verbal de-escalation. Contact our Director of Loss Control, Robert Blaisdell, at [rblaisdell@wrightinsurance.com](mailto:rblaisdell@wrightinsurance.com) for more information.

## Upcoming Training Seminars

Several video conference trainings are scheduled for members in October, November, and December. We'll cover PESH-mandated topics including Workplace Violence, Right-to-Know, and Bloodborne Pathogens. Visit [www.compalliance.org](http://www.compalliance.org) for our calendar through the end of the year.

### HAZWOPER Training

Friday, 10/13: 8:00 - 8:30 AM

Thursday, 11/16: 8:00 - 8:30 AM

Monday, 12/11: 8:00 - 8:30 AM

### Upcoming Virtual Trainings

- Friday, 10/13: 10 AM - 12 PM
- Monday, 10/16: 10 AM - 12 PM
- Tuesday, 10/17: 1 PM - 3 PM
- Monday, 10/23: 10 AM - 12 PM
- Wednesday, 10/25: 10 AM - 12 PM
- Monday, 10/30: 10 AM - 12 PM
- Monday, 11/6: 10 AM - 12 PM
- Thursday, 11/9: 1 PM - 3 PM

## Increase in Minimum Weekly Benefit

On September 6th, 2023, Governor Hochul signed changes to workers' compensation benefits into law. This law increases the minimum weekly benefits for permanent or temporary partial disability for new injuries occurring on or after January 1st, 2024. Minimum weekly benefits will increase from \$150 to \$275 in 2024, \$325 in 2025, and one-fifth of the state average weekly wage (SAWW) in 2026.

The minimum rate will be adjusted yearly beginning July 1st, based upon the applicable SAWW. In general, if a claimant's average weekly wage (AWW) is less than the applicable minimum rate, the claimant will receive their full AWW as compensation while disabled.

## Increase in Minimum Weekly Benefit (cont.)

This revision will impact employers with a relatively low-wage-earning workforce. For low-wage earners, the statute will disincentivize some claimants from returning to work, as they will receive a relatively high weekly benefit while staying at home. Additionally, if their AWW is less than the minimum rate, they receive their full AWW while disabled. For the current schedule of benefits, [click here](#).

## Claim Reporting & The Portal

When an accident occurs, one of your primary responsibilities is to report it as soon as possible. If you are unsure whether an incident should be reported, reach out to the Claims team. You may be penalized by the Workers' Compensation Board if the claim, or any subsequent forms, are not filed timely with WRM.



A claim can be filed on our portal or by filling out a C2-F form and faxing or emailing it to us. Upon submission, the portal allows you to report and monitor claim status and receive an immediate claim number.

We have a dedicated email address for emailing first reports. Please email us your completed First Report of Injury (C-2F) at [wcreporting@wrightinsurance.com](mailto:wcreporting@wrightinsurance.com). Telephonic reporting services can also be arranged for your convenience. Please contact Maria Luciano at 516-357-4135 for any inquiries about this service. **If you have an accident that involves serious/catastrophic injuries, please call us immediately.**

If you are not enrolled in the portal, you must reach out to [Maria Luciano](#) with your full name, title, phone number, and email address. Use your assigned credentials to log in [here](#).