

1994 COMP  ALLIANCE 2024

30  
YEARS

Exceptional Service. Long-Term Stability.

# THE ALLIANCE ADVISOR

**SPECIAL 30TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION**

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NEWS AND SAFETY INFORMATION

## Comp Alliance Celebrates Thirty Years of Service

In 1994, the Association of Towns established a workers' compensation group self-insurance program with eight initial members: the New York State Workers' Compensation Alliance (Comp Alliance). The Association sought to create a service-oriented program that would allow its members to meet their long-term workers' compensation liabilities while maintaining stable premiums. Thirty years later, this principle is more important than ever before, and with the support of both the Association of Towns and the New York State Conference of Mayors (NYCOM), proven leaders in representing the interests of towns, villages, and cities in New York, the Comp Alliance is uniquely positioned to meet the needs of New York municipalities.

What started with a handful of towns and villages has grown to 350 members and now includes a significant (and growing!) number of school districts among our membership. As we've grown, we have added the required services, resources, and staff to ensure our members get the attention they deserve. Whether through in-person visits, our online academies, or our School Officials Network, our municipal and school officials can find the resources they need to maintain safe workplaces, check on claims, and help injured workers return to work. In this age of intergovernmental cooperation, the involvement of the Association of Towns and NYCOM as partners in our program highlights the advantage of municipalities and schools working together for the benefit of our members.

Nowhere is this principle more evident than in our award programs. Introduced in 2019, our loyalty and safe workplace awards provide a means for Comp Alliance members to reap the benefits of a successful shared-service program. As we continue to reduce the frequency and severity of workplace injuries for our members and maximize the administrative savings on workers' compensation, we are able to share the savings with our members. This has led to the return of almost \$9 million in funding contributions back to our members over the last five years.

So much has changed for our members in the 30 years since the Comp Alliance was formed. Like many of its members, the Comp Alliance has had to adapt to the changing economic, social, and political environments. Yet the Comp Alliance's mission remains today what it was in 1994. We understand how important it is to keep municipal employees safe while simultaneously maintaining a stable budget and avoiding unexpected costs. Our dual focus on employee safety and budgetary stability remains the guidepost for all we do. As we look back on our 30 years of service to our members, our commitment to our founding principles has allowed the Comp Alliance to thrive despite the challenges we faced and will continue to benefit our members going forward.

*Michael Kenneally, Executive Director*

## What's New with the Comp Academy?

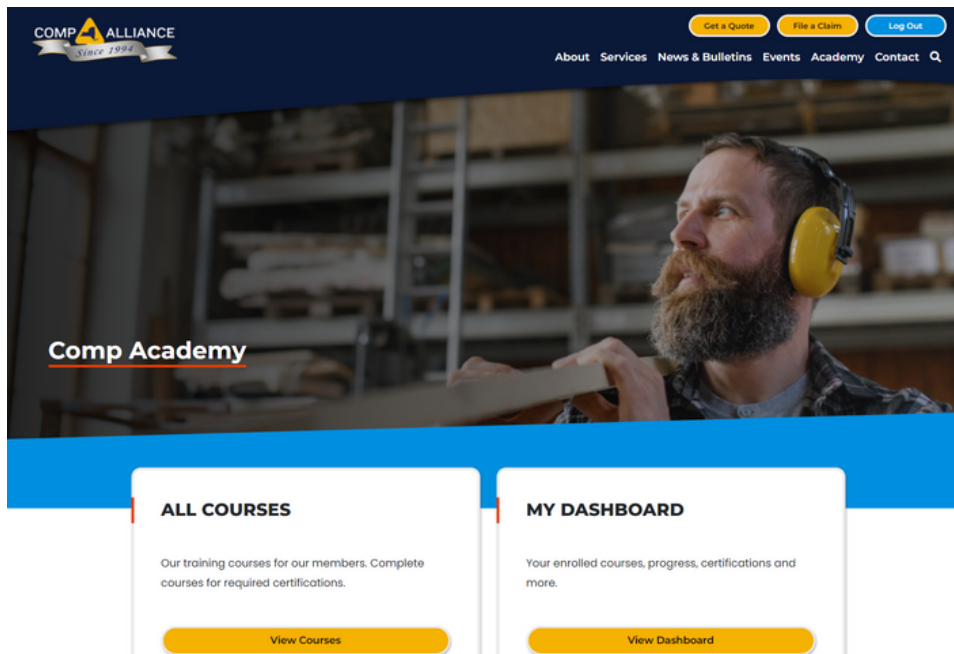
Have you heard? The Comp Academy received a makeover! As a result of security improvements, all accounts were removed from the system when the website transitioned in September. If you haven't already, please email us to reinstate your account at [compalliancemarketing@wrightinsurance.com](mailto:compalliancemarketing@wrightinsurance.com). If you would like to register several emails, please send us a list and we will follow up once they are approved to register. We will send you a link to the registration form and the instructions for completing the form and gaining access to the new Comp Academy.

After logging into the Academy, users can click on the Academy menu option. This page gives you access to all courses, the dashboard, the document center, all safety bulletins, the link to Safety Source, safety talks, and safety webinars.

You will find all online training available on the Academy by clicking View Courses. If you wish to enroll in a course, click the course you are interested in, then click Enroll on the following page.

You will now have access to the course materials. The document center is where you will find annual reports, archived newsletters, financial statements, forms, and additional training materials. When you click View Bulletins, you will find all Safety Bulletins, including those that are archived. Lastly, the dashboard is where you will find courses you are enrolled in, grades, certificates, and account information.

The Comp Alliance is continuing to build a better Comp Academy experience for our members. We look forward to sharing more with you this year. If you have any questions or need help, reach out to [compalliancemarketing@wrightinsurance.com](mailto:compalliancemarketing@wrightinsurance.com) and we will assist you.



# Safe Operation of Motor Vehicles

Within the past year, some Comp Alliance members have experienced catastrophic employee injuries resulting from motor vehicle accidents. Driving is a major contributor to workplace injuries but often goes unnoticed. Most of us take for granted the dangers that exist behind the wheel of a large truck, police cruiser, firetruck, pickup truck, or any other municipal vehicle. To protect employees, remember that safe driving equates to the management of two factors: safe vehicles and a driver's ability.

## Safe Vehicles

All vehicles permitted to be driven on the streets, roads, and highways around the state need to be in good mechanical condition. This means having the following in good working order:

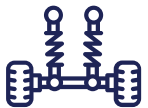
**Tires:** Tires need adequate tread depth and pressure allowing for stopping ability and safe operation on all road conditions.



**Brakes:** There should be adequate depth on pads and rotors, minimal brake pedal fade, and the parking brake must work adequately. Additionally, brake lines should be holding fluid, and the brake fluid reservoir should be full. For commercial motor vehicles (CMVs), airbrakes must be in proper working order.



**Steering:** The steering wheel should have minimal play, power steering must be functioning with appropriate fluid levels, and linkages need to be tight with minimal wear.



**Suspension:** Shock absorber mountings must be adequate, spring and torsion bars must be stable, and the chassis and frame should not show excessive wear, rust, or movement.



**Lights:** There should be proper operation of headlights, including high-beam function, and taillights, including backup lights and backing alarms.



**Windshield:** The windshield must be devoid of cracks or other obstructions and wipers need to function properly.



**Horn:** The horn should work, including backup alarms if equipped.



**Mirrors:** There should be no cracks in mirrors, and they must be adjusted to properly fit each driver. ➡

## Safe Operation of Motor Vehicles (cont.)

All these areas are reviewed during an annual NYS vehicle inspection, showing their importance for safe vehicle operation while on the roadways. It is critical to ensure your vehicles are road-worthy and safe to operate via the previous areas mentioned. Also, all maintenance must be performed at regular intervals and documented, and vehicles, including CMVs, must be inspected annually.

### A Driver's Ability

Having a safe vehicle on the roadway is just as important as having a driver who can safely operate the vehicle. All drivers of municipal vehicles must adhere to the NYS vehicle and traffic laws. This includes obvious rules such as maintaining a safe speed, slowing down for adverse road conditions, obeying traffic signs and signals, yielding to oncoming traffic and emergency vehicles, avoiding tailgating, driving defensively, and maintaining visibility throughout travel.

Driving defensively may be the hardest part of these operations but it is the most important. When a person drives on the defense, they are continuously monitoring the roadway for conditions that may require an evasive maneuver. Defensive drivers proactively anticipate and effectively react to several hazards and avoid potential threats. Sometimes, it's expecting other drivers to disobey the rules of the road and pull out in front of you, brake late, change lanes quickly, or fail to yield. Drivers should anticipate this, and hover over their brakes during these



situations, ready to brake at any time. Other times, it might mean slowing down more than usual as a driver looks to separate themselves from other, more dangerous drivers on the road. Driving safely also means scanning the roadway, continuously observing traffic, weather conditions, and pedestrians, staying out of trouble by "leaving yourself an out," and slowing down when conditions require. Defensive driving also improves a driver's mental state of health as it avoids potentially dangerous situations, calming the driver's mind. Many motor vehicle accidents can be prevented when drivers pay attention and drive defensively. ➡

## Safe Operation of Motor Vehicles (cont.)

A safe driver must be able to carefully travel in adverse road conditions:

- Cold weather driving requires increased following distances, as stopping can be compromised. Vehicles need longer to warm up, including brakes, tires, defrosters, and heaters, and site distances may decrease due to snow piles at intersections. Drive with extreme caution under these conditions.
- Slick or wet conditions make for dangerous driving and test a driver by greatly limiting stopping distances because of reduced friction. Hydroplaning can occur when passing through standing water, which can place the vehicle into a spin. Drivers should slow down before driving over standing water and firmly grasp the steering wheel to maintain direction.
- Snow, sleet, or rain causes limited visibility and reduces vehicle traction. To drive safely under these conditions, drivers should reduce speed, make sure their vehicle is visible to other cars, increase following distance, control wheel spin by slightly steering into the spin, and properly maintain the vehicle's defrosters and windshield wipers.

All municipal vehicle operations need to support safe vehicles and safe drivers. Review vehicle operation policies with applicable staff, provide safe driver training, when necessary, review vehicle accident procedures and reporting requirements, and emphasize the expectations of safe municipal vehicle operations. When undertaken fully, your municipal vehicle operations will see an increase in driver morale and a decrease in accidents and injuries. For further information and driver training programs, please contact the Comp Alliance Director of Loss Control, Robert Blaisdell at [rblaisdell@wrightinsurance.com](mailto:rblaisdell@wrightinsurance.com) or (518) 330-8591.

## Upcoming Training Seminars

A new year brings another round of required annual training. Our calendar is updated through the first half of the year. We'll cover PESH-mandated topics including Workplace Violence, Right-to-Know, and Bloodborne Pathogens in all training sessions unless noted as HAZWOPER. Take a look at the Q1 trainings on the next page and visit [www.compalliance.org](http://www.compalliance.org) for our full calendar.

## Upcoming Training Seminars (cont.)

### Q1

#### January

1/15 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
1/17 8:00 am - 8:30 am HAZWOPER  
1/18 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm  
1/22 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
1/24 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm  
1/29 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
1/31 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

#### February

2/5 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
2/7 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
2/12 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
2/16 8:00 am - 8:30 am HAZWOPER  
2/16 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
2/22 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm  
2/26 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
2/29 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

#### March

3/4 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
3/7 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
3/11 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
3/13 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm  
3/18 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
3/20 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm  
3/25 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
3/26 8:00 am - 8:30 am HAZWOPER  
3/26 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

## Upcoming Conferences



The NYCOM Winter Legislative Meeting is almost here! We'll see you at the Marriott Albany February 4-6. Be sure to stop by our booth and say hello.



We're looking forward to seeing you at the Association of Towns Annual Meeting at the Marriott Marquis in New York City February 18-20! We hope you'll attend our Monday session on *Managing Stress in the Public Service* or our Tuesday session on *Maintaining Non-Toxic Workplaces*. Members who renewed in January should stop by our booth at #102 to receive their loyalty award. We'll be announcing the 2024 Haber Leadership Award recipient at Breakfast With the Association!