Prework Screening

AN EMPLOYER'S GUIDE



Prework Screening

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In an employer's daily and long-term operations, the areas of hiring, safety, workers' compensation and loss control are interrelated. Because each hiring decision ultimately affects an employer's bottom line, it is both a *priority* and a *challenge* to hire the right employee who is capable of doing his/her work safely and productively.

EMC Insurance Companies is sensitive to this employment concern. This informational guide presents the benefits of prework screening in the hiring process and outlines steps employers can use to develop their own unique and integrated program. Using appropriate prework screening, employers:

- Can determine whether or not their job candidates can safely perform the essential physical demands of the job for which they applied, were selected and given a conditional job offer
- Have a properly constructed assessment tool that is medical in nature and legally defensible because it is based on measurable task criteria (such as written job descriptions using functional analysis data)
- · Know, step by step, how to establish their prework screening policy and measurable protocols

A successful prework screening program benefits both employers and employees. *Count on EMC*[®] to help get you started.

EMC Insurance Companies takes pride in providing our policyholders with a variety of services at no additional cost. For more information on prework screening and other injury prevention and management services, call your independent agent or contact EMC directly.

EMC Insurance Companies Risk Improvement Department 515-345-2520 losscontrol@emcins.com

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Common Questions About Prework Screening

What is prework screening?

Prework screening is a series of tasks designed to assess a worker's ability to perform physical or other demands of a job for which he/she has been hired. Prework screening can also include drug screening, psychological and various competency tests. Prework screening should only be administered after the selected candidate has accepted a conditional job offer.

What is the main reason an employer would want to use prework screening in the workplace?

The primary reason is to hire workers who can physically and safely do the required tasks of the job.

Are there other benefits to using prework screening in the workplace?

Yes. Other benefits to the organization include:

- · Demonstration and promotion of fair hiring practices
- Promotion of safe job assignments and performance throughout the workplace
- · Reduction in frequency and severity of work-related injuries
- · Use of objective job-related information in managing injury and return to work situations
- Improvement of work efficiency (by placing the right worker in the right job)
- · Increased worker morale through participation in the prework screening process

Prework screening is also helpful in case an employee is injured on the job. The information collected during the prework screening process can be used as a baseline that allows the employer (and medical providers) to review the actual physical demand strength the employee possessed as a new hire.

Prework screening test results can also be used to assess an injured worker's physical abilities when returning to work from an injury or illness. Using the same criteria for new hires, the employer can confirm that the returning worker is "fit for duty" after recovery and rehabilitation.

Is prework screening legal?

Yes, prework screening is legal when performed according to standards laid out by federal laws, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), guidelines from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and state law, where applicable. EMC Insurance Companies does recommend that you have any prework screening program reviewed by your own legal counsel prior to implementation.

How are jobs selected to be screened?

The selection process involves the following steps:

- Review current job descriptions to identify essential/critical tasks. If you do not have job descriptions, these
 must be created before proceeding.
- Review your company's injury history for the past two to four years and identify jobs that have higher incidence of
 injury, lost time and injury severity. If you need assistance in determining which jobs have a higher injury incidence
 and level of severity, contact your independent insurance agent or local EMC loss control representative, or email
 losscontrol@emcins.com.
- · Identify jobs that have hazards such as heavy lifting, or those that require significant physical activity.
- Prioritize all jobs for development of prework screenings. There should be three priority levels:
 - Priority 1 urgent
 - · Priority 2 intermediate
 - Priority 3 low priority
- Arrange to complete functional job descriptions for "Priority 1" jobs.
- Remember that prework screening is most effective when high-risk jobs are identified, described, targeted and tested.

How is a functional job description developed?

- Assess the quality of your job description information. Does it include essential functions and skills, essential
 knowledge levels, U.S. Department of Labor definitions of weight classification and frequencies and other
 measurable functional data? Does the job description information need to be updated? Can this information serve
 as a basis for functional testing?
- Determine your ability to complete functional job descriptions. Look at other examples of job descriptions to determine what information is needed and how these descriptions are different. EMC can provide resources to help you complete this step.
- Establish a time frame for completion of the functional job descriptions labeled as "Priority 1."

What process should be followed when selecting a qualified physical therapist and clinic to conduct prework screening?

- First, establish an organization-wide philosophy of which types of testing should be completed and why, then develop formal policies to ensure consistency across the entire organization.
- Identify local physical therapy and occupational medicine clinics that are capable of conducting prework screenings and functional job descriptions.
- Schedule interviews with therapists and occupational medicine clinics, and ask therapists/physicians to tour your
 workplace as part of the interviewing process. Ask about their testing criteria, reporting and documentation formats,
 their ability to work with your functional job description information and which specific testing processes they use.
 EMC can provide assistance, if necessary.
- Determine which therapists/clinics are appropriate for your prework screening needs.

What information is the therapist responsible for providing to the employer, and in what manner?

- Following each prework screening, a pass/fail result and fitness baseline report should be provided to the employer regarding the tested job candidate. These should be delivered both verbally and in written form.
- Periodically, a statistical report of data in aggregate form (personally-identifying information removed) should be
 provided to the employer with information about the number of individuals screened and the number identified to
 have pre-existing musculoskeletal conditions, neck/back, and upper and lower extremity conditions. It should also
 include the percentage of individuals tested that failed or passed.

If an injury occurs during the prework screening, how should this situation be handled, and who is responsible for the costs?

Prior to the prework screening, the job candidate is fully informed and provided with the written testing criteria and methods, as well as the written job description and functional job description information. Before testing, each candidate is asked if any reasonable accommodations are needed during the testing. Each job candidate should be asked to sign an acknowledgment form, accepting the risks of the prework screening, and a written agreement waiving liability against the employer and their designated testing agency for any personal injury incurred by the candidate during the testing. Depending on your state's laws and legal climate, this may reduce your liability for injuries that occur as a result of the prework screening.

If the job candidate has a noticeable condition that could create a risk of injury during the screening, what should be done?

The job candidate should be asked to reschedule his/her testing until he/she has seen his/her regular physician about the condition. The testing should not resume until the physician provides written medical clearance to proceed with the prework screening. A time frame should be given to the job candidate within which they must provide the clearance information and reschedule the prework screening. The cost for seeing a physician is the job candidate's responsibility. The candidate should sign a form to document the receipt of these instructions and conditions.

Where should the prework screening take place?

Depending on the type of screening tests selected that are appropriate to the job, prework screening may take place at the employer's place of business, at a therapy/occupational medicine clinic or both.

Are sample forms and policy statements available?

Yes. EMC has a variety of sample forms and policy statements to share with policyholders. Physical therapists who perform prework screens may also offer sample forms.

Six Steps for Implementing Prework Screening

STEP ONE: Target the Jobs to be Tested by Prework Screening

- Review injury data (such as your injury records or EMC's claims records) to identify problem jobs that should be screened for first. Look for jobs affected by lost time from injuries such as musculoskeletal/back injuries, multiple injuries and trauma, and jobs where task activities include lifting and carrying, balancing, use of ladders, overhead reaching, repetitive motion, repetitive postures, awkward postures or climbing.
- Other jobs can be selected at a later date, when the prework screening proves its cost-effectiveness with the most problematic jobs.
- · Not all jobs within an organization need to be prescreened.
- Construct an organization-wide prework screening policy statement.

| Question: Who completes this step? Answer: Ideally, the employer completes the from EMC and a physical therapist. |
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STEP TWO: Analyze the Physical Demands

- For the jobs targeted in step one, identify and measure the physical and other demands so essential tasks are clearly described and validated. EMC can provide guidance in standard job analysis, functional analysis and job hazard analysis procedures.
- · Compile data for each job and create written job descriptions.

| Question: Who can complete the activities in this step? | Answer: Trained employers can complete job analysis and descriptions. They can also receive assistance from EMC. Physical therapists who are involved in creating the prework screening test criteria will want to confirm and verify the essential job functions and requirement, so they can also be involved in the job analysis process. The employer will date and sign off on job descriptions, which are always considered to be their company documents. |
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STEP THREE: Develop the Prework Screening Test Features and Pass/Fail Criteria

- Provide job description and functional analysis information to the physical therapist, who will then identify the
 prework screening test features and develop the actual performance tests. (You should receive written documents
 from the therapist for your review.)
- Reliability and validity of the test features will be established and documented by accurate job-related data in the functional job description and other job descriptions.

| Question: Who documents the criteria for the prework screening tests and writes up the testing form? | Answer: The physical therapists who will be conducting the prework screening test perform these steps. Having qualified therapists trained in functional methods of prework screening is critical to reliability and validity of the tests. |
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STEP FOUR: Establish Consistent Procedures Before Testing Begins

Answer the following questions before you begin testing:

- · Where will testing occur?
- · How will applicants be referred to this location?
- What will happen procedurally if an applicant's resting blood pressure and/or heart rate exceeds safe levels for testing?
- · How will any test-related injuries be handled?
- · How will pregnant or disabled applicants be tested?
- · How will the test results be handled?
- How will the test failures be handled?
- · What information is to be shared with the employer?

Question: Who completes the consistent procedures in this step?

Answer: The employer may initially determine the consistent procedures to be followed with input, as necessary, from EMC, the physical therapist and legal counsel.

STEP FIVE: Test Existing Employees

- To ensure that your prework screening criteria are as accurate as possible, use the same criteria to test the employees who already hold the jobs you have selected for prework screening.
- Assure these employees that their test results will not be shared with the employer, except as aggregate data to further establish validity of the test for applicants to the job.
- Use these results to correct any procedural, communication or technical problems before job applicants are tested.

| Question: Why is this step important? Answer: This testing helps validate the testing criteria provides reliable baseline information. |
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STEP SIX: Review Outcome and Follow-Up Data

- You should receive periodic updates from your physical therapist on the pass/fail rates, the test items most
 frequently failed and any information regarding significant differences in fail rates based on gender, age or ethnic
 groups so that if the testing process needs to be modified, appropriate changes are made.
- You should consider tracking your work-related injury costs before and after initiation of the prework screening program. This can help your organization decide whether or not to continue or expand the screening program.

| Question: Who provides me with this data and what do I do with it? | Answer: The physical therapy/occupational medicine clinic is expected to maintain a database of all prework screening tests completed and to share this information with the employer on an agreed-upon schedule—we suggest quarterly reviews. EMC can help you review the data and determine the impact of prework screening on your loss ratios. |
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Sample Prework Screen Policy Statement

The purpose of (insert organization's name)'s post-offer prework screening program is to determine whether or not a job candidate is physically capable of safely performing the essential demands of the job for which they have applied and been conditionally selected. This screening exam is considered a medical exam and is completed by medical or allied health personnel. Biological functions such as blood pressure, heart rate, respiration and range of motion may be measured as part of the assessment. Adherence to standards and guidelines established by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) are followed in this screening.

Importance of a Formal Policy

It is important for an employer to have an established corporate policy regarding prework screening. Because the ADA requires an employer to make reasonable accommodations to allow an individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of the job, this must be factored into both pre- and post-offer tests. As part of the employer's orientation to testing, job candidates should have access to a written explanation of the employer's testing policy and purpose, as well as a description of the physical testing to be completed and its medical and job-related criteria. Prior to prework screening, all candidates should be asked if any reasonable accommodation to the testing will be needed and requested. If accommodations to testing are needed and requested, they will need to be in place prior to the prework screening. The prework screening policy statement should also address protocols if the test is stopped before it can be completed. Stopping the test prematurely may be done by either the testing agent or the candidate for medical or other reasons.

A Note about Prework Screening Test Procedures

Upon reviewing the results, the employer can decide whether or not the candidate can complete the essential functions of the job and if he or she will be hired. This is important because only the employer can make this decision—not the testing agent.

Injury Prevention and Management

An Integrated System

For any employer, keeping employees safe and productive are primary concerns. An integrated approach to injury prevention and management can help you minimize the number, severity and cost of those injuries as well as the loss of productivity that occurs when employees are injured.

Key "pieces" of a good injury prevention and management system include:

- <u>Safety</u>—A good safety program should be at the center of your system
 to help identify and control the risk of injury in your operations. A good
 program should include investigation of accidents to determine root
 causes and prevent them from recurring. Safety should be integrated into
 all parts of your organization's operations and be part of your workplace culture.
- Injury Prevention & Management
 Hiring Health & Wellness
 Safety
 Select Return
 Provider To Work

 Do you have all the pieces?
- <u>Hiring Practices</u>—Good hiring practices can help you hire skilled, knowledgeable and physically capable
 employees who are suited for the job. Detailed functional job descriptions are a key element in the hiring process.
 If job descriptions contain information on the physical demands of key tasks, then post-offer prework screening can
 be used to help hire only workers who are physically capable of doing the job.
- Select Provider—Good reporting, prompt medical attention and excellent communication are at the heart of effective workers' compensation claim handling. EMC's Select/Preferred Provider program is a two-part program that helps you organize your response to an initial workplace injury/illness. EMC helps you create procedures and reports that instruct the workers' compensation team (injured employee, employer, treating physician and claims adjuster) of their roles and responsibilities, so everyone knows where to start and what is expected. Additionally, where permitted by law, we'll help you select a designated/preferred medical provider. By designating a physician or clinic to handle workplace injuries and illnesses, the injured employee receives consistent, quality medical care with a focus on returning to work.
- Return to Work—When workers become injured or ill, expenses can add up quickly due to lost time, medical costs and the hiring of replacement workers. A return to work program is designed to bring injured employees back to work safely and as soon as possible in a medically approved and accommodated capacity. Benefits can include reductions in workers' compensation costs and experience modification factors, reduced temporary total disability and other insurance payments, reduced likelihood of employees becoming totally or permanently disabled and improved communication with the employee (a factor shown to reduce the frequency of attorney involvement).
- <u>Health and Wellness</u>—The majority of healthcare costs stem from preventable diseases. By adopting healthier lifestyles, employees can decrease their risk factors for chronic disease, which may result in lower healthcare expenses for your organization. Health and wellness programs are focused on preventing employees from developing chronic conditions that drive these higher costs. Benefits of implementing a successful wellness program may include lower healthcare costs, increased productivity, reduced presenteeism and absenteeism, fewer injuries and reduced workers' compensation costs.

Additional Information



Prework Screening Programs

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Hiring qualified employees is one of the most important business decisions an employer can make; however, it can also be one of the most difficult. A prework screening program can help determine which applicants are best qualified for specific tasks.

A prework screen (PWS) is a management tool that can help an employer assess a job candidate's ability to safely assume and/or resume work duties. The PWS is designed by a physical therapist using information the employer provides. Traditionally, a PWS is conducted after a conditional job offer has been made. It consists of a series of objective tasks that assess a worker's ability to perform the physical demands of a job. A PWS can also be used in transitional return to work (RTW) situations where an employee has been issued medical restrictions related to work activity.

Laying the Groundwork for a PWS Program

To create a PWS for a specific job, a physical therapist needs accurate job description information that provides objective task data. (See the resources listed at the end of this document for help with preparing job descriptions.)

Choosing a Physical Therapist

During a PWS, a physical therapist can help identify limitations or conditions exhibited by a candidate that could create a higher risk of injury on the job.

A PWS should be conducted using methods consistent with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) regulations and all other applicable state

and federal laws and regulations. Employers should pick a therapist who:

> Is properly trained in PWS testing and design methods and understands



legal requirements

- Can perform functional job analysis and work with loss control representatives
- Understands the world of work and is a skilled communicator
- Is geographically close to the employer's job site(s)
- Has experience in both occupational and nonoccupational treatments

Following a PWS, the therapist gives the employer the worker's pass/fail results for each tested area, as well as any suggestions for additional training for the worker (i.e., proper lifting techniques). The employer is also informed of medical reasons or other reasons the test may have been halted.

Continued



Prework Screening Programs

Benefits of Prework Screens

There are many benefits that come from conducting PWS as part of the hiring process:

- Improved work efficiencies and safety by matching the right worker with the job
- Reduced workers' compensation costs due to injury prevention
- Easier return to work transition for injured employees
- Avoidance of hiring prejudice

EMC Can Help

EMC can provide assistance to commercial policyholders setting up a PWS program. Our loss control process includes:

- Researching past work-related injuries to identify patterns of injury
- Analyzing job tasks in your workplace and providing guidance to help you develop job descriptions on which a PWS will be based
- Identifying physical therapists who can appropriately conduct a PWS, help you create testing criteria and track your data over time

For more information on setting up a prework screening program at your company, contact your EMC loss control representative or your independent insurance agent. You can also email losscontrol@emcins.com.

For Additional Information

EMC Tech Sheets: www.emcins.com

- Return to Work Programs—Parts I and II
- Employee Job Descriptions:
 The Primary Employment Document

EMC Loss Prevention Information Manual:

www.emcins.com

• Employment Practices section

Department of Labor: www.dol.gov

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: www.eeoc.gov





TECH SHEET

Employee Job Descriptions

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The core foundation of any business is the worker, the job tasks and producing a product or providing a service. By correctly matching workers to jobs for which they are qualified, employers can improve safety, while decreasing the costs of doing business. Properly identifying and documenting your organization's specific work activities with employee job descriptions is a wise investment of time that can help you better manage your workplace.

What is a job description?

A job description is a written document that outlines specific measurable job functions by defining the critical demands of the job, as well as other requirements, conditions and qualifications (including mental and physical tasks, working environment, job hazards, safety and other equipment used, and educational levels).

With job descriptions in place, employers have objective and quantifiable information to use in their employment decision-making. Job descriptions can be used to develop pre-work screenings as part of the hiring process, to ensure new workers are qualified for the position. When evaluating a worker's performance, a job description becomes the baseline for comparison, allowing a more unbiased assessment.

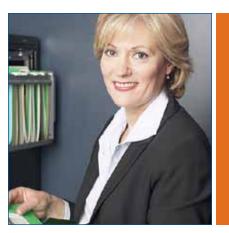
If a worker is injured on or off the job, job description information is useful to both the employer and treating physician when considering a modified, transitional or full return to work. Job descriptions should be updated regularly to reflect changing employee tasks.

A job description is an informational tool that can be useful in many ways and can become the basis for:

- Decision-making in hiring and retaining employees
- Completing employee performance evaluations
- Arranging job modification and return-to-work placements for injured/ill employees

How information is gathered, written

Job descriptions are written based on objective data gathered during a process called job analysis. Employers can be trained to



complete a job analysis and write job descriptions, or outside analysts can be hired for this purpose.

A job analysis or job description will usually include:

- Position title and company name
- Department or work location
- Reporting lines
- Supervisory status (does position supervise others?)
- Job summary and purpose
- Essential functions
- Nonessential functions
- Minimum qualifications (physical and cognitive)
- Educational levels required
- Description of workplace environment
- Materials and equipment used on the job
- Personal protective equipment used
- Signatures or approvals
- Name of evaluator and date of job analysis/ description

Continued





Workers' comp and employee illness

In workers' compensation situations, employers deal with insurance representatives, medical providers, sometimes legal counsel and, of course, their employees. The job description assists insurance adjusters in making a full assessment of the claim and investigating return-to-work options. Insurance adjusters can make timely inquiries with the treating physician, therapists, employer and employee about specific modifications that would allow the injured worker to return to work when appropriate.

Physicians want to review the job description, especially when asked to make informed medical opinions about a worker's return to work (in a full or modified capacity) or when prescribing a rehabilitation plan. Physical and occupational therapists use job descriptions as clinical planning tools for injured workers in their work conditioning programs and functional capacity testing.

An employer with an effective job description program in place is also in a better position to deal with discrimination claims, including those related to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) and other state and federal regulations. While job description programs are not required, they do help document job-related information, which can improve compliance with these regulations.

Benefits of up-to-date job descriptions

- Workers' job-related responsibilities are well documented and defined, based on objective information
- Employees have information explaining their current job functions, qualifications and responsibilities, as well as any other jobs to which they may advance
- Employers have a factual basis for completing employee evaluations, delivering corrective action, assigning key responsibilities and creating specific training
- Appropriate pre-work screens can be developed to help match workers to jobs for which they are suited
- When employees are injured or ill, job descriptions can be used by the employer, employee, insurance adjuster and medical providers to make decisions about a modified, transitional or full return to work
- Employers have a basis for documenting task changes for existing positions or to help develop job descriptions for new positions

For Additional Information

U.S. Department of Justice: www.ada.gov

U.S. Department of Labor: www.dol.gov

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: www.eeoc.gov

EMC Insurance Companies: www.emcins.com

- EMC Loss Prevention Information Manual Employment Practices
- Tech Sheets







Online Loss Control Services

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As an EMC commercial policyholder, you have access to a variety of free online services at www.emcins.com.

Reliable Information

Tech Sheets—Get the information you need quickly with these short and to-the-point documents that provide detailed information on specific hazards and loss control topics.

Loss Prevention Information Manual—When you need more in-depth information, review this collection of documents that fully outlines loss control topics and can help you develop required written programs.

Safety Talks—Easily access over 1,000 toolbox talks for your next safety meeting, or use as handouts or training aids.

Loss Control Forms—Download our fillable PDF forms, which include accident investigation forms, crane inspection reports and forms to notify EMC Insurance Companies of the closing or reopening of fire sprinkler system valves.

Loss Control Insights—Read the quarterly publication for our commercial policyholders that focuses on hot topics in safety and current loss control techniques.

Training Assistance

Online Training—Train employees when it's convenient for you with these self-directed sessions on topics including defensive driving and bloodborne pathogens. You can also register for the Training Management System, which tracks your organization's training records.

Safety Videos—Check out a training video from our library of nearly 500 titles. All you pay is return shipping.

Safety Signs and Posters—Order free safety posters and signs from our collection, or download them instantly and print from your own computer.

Training Certificates—

Recognize the success of your employees with a training certificate you can customize and print.

Safe Driver Awards—Reward safe drivers who

are not involved in preventable accidents with this program, which provides congratulatory gifts at specified safe driving anniversaries.



Planning and Protection

Employment Practices Liability Tools—Help protect your organization with resources for managing employment risks, such as discrimination, wrongful termination and harassment.

Disaster Planning Tools—Plan ahead to keep your organization running in the event of a business interruption. We've partnered with the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety to offer the Open for Business series, which provides resources that help you create a business continuity plan.

Ergonomics and Wellness Tools—Access our NIOSH Lifting Equation tool or download computer workstation posture handouts. You'll also find stretching instruction booklets designed for office workers and other employees.

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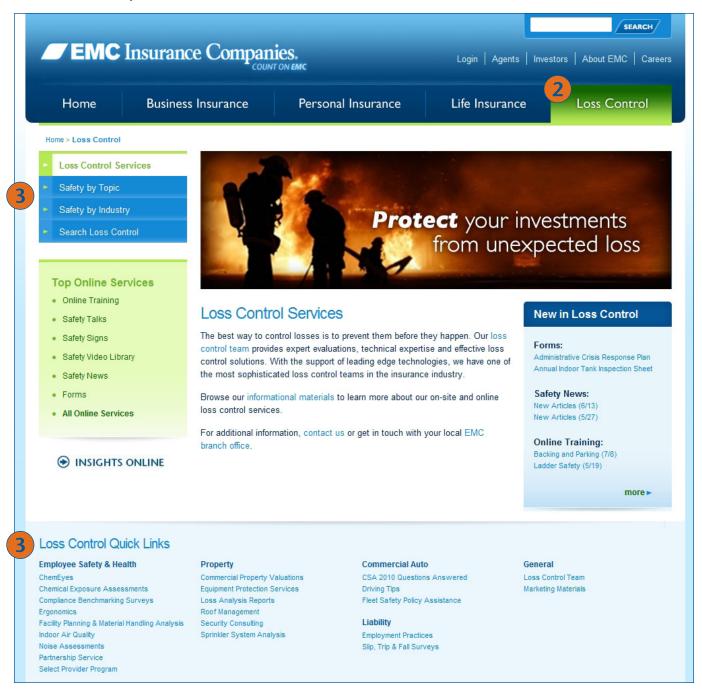
Online Loss Control Services

To access the services listed:

- 1. Visit www.emcins.com.
- 2. Select Loss Control from the menu.
- 3. Navigate the site using the left-hand menus or the quick links at the bottom

of the page. You can browse by topic, industry or service type.

Some of these resources will require an EMC policy number. If you do not know your policy number, contact your agent.



Home Office: 717 Mulberry • Des Moines, IA 50309 • 800-447-2295 • www.emcins.com





For more information, contact the Home Office Risk Improvement Department:

EMC Insurance Companies 717 Mulberry Des Moines, IA 50309

losscontrol@emcins.com www.emcins.com

