



COMPLETE Coverage

LANDSCAPE CONTRACTORS INSURANCE SERVICES, INC. NEWSLETTER

HOLIDAYS 2010



DAVID R.
BLOODGOOD,
CIC
LCIS Sales Manager

Are you the cheapest...?

How many times have you heard that question while bidding on a job? In this economy, there is no escaping that our price points have become more critical than ever before. As business owners we are faced with the challenge of doing the same work for less, or worse, more work for less, to compete for, retain, or earn the business. This is true for both landscapers and your CLCA endorsed insurance program from LCIS.

When asked, "Are you the cheapest?," I always like to respond with these two questions:

1. Are you more concerned with the Price or the Cost? Price is simply the premium you pay for the policy or price you pay for the job. Cost is the premium you pay plus uncovered claims, partially covered claims, legal fees, short and long term expenses associated with poor claim handling, deductibles or poor workmanship, inferior materials, construction defect issues, consumer complaints and lost man hours just to name a few.

The best cost represents a fair price with the coverages you need while providing all the services that landscapers and their clients have come to expect.

2. Are you the cheapest at what you do? If you are not the cheapest, why should I do business with you in this economy? Aren't you all basically the same, with all the same tools providing basically the same services? Think about it for a minute. If you are not the cheapest how do you justify the value of "why" you are worth more than your competitor? What do you do, how long have you been doing it or

what do you offer or bring to the table that others in your industry do not? How did you calculate that value and how do you explain this additional value (expense) to your client or prospective client? We all bring our own unique "value" to the table.

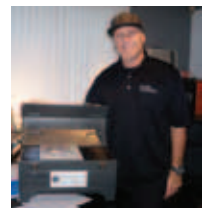
Landscape Contractors Insurance Services (LCIS) was formed by and out of the vision of the California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA) over 20 years ago with the primary charter and mission to provide financially strong insurance products and stable insurance premiums solely to the members of CLCA through the various economic and insurance market cycles in California. Additionally, LCIS has contributed over \$50,000,000 in rebates, equity contributions, sponsorships and support of CLCA and the landscape contractor industry in California.

There have been many positive changes at LCIS in 2010 and we are excited about the New Year ahead of us. We look forward to working with you in 2011 to offer our specialized Green Industry insurance programs at very competitive rates representing the best cost and greatest value for our CLCA member family.

Take care and stay green!

You're a Winner with LCIS!

LCIS recently participated in the Landscape Expo in Long Beach in October, where our representatives shared the value of CLCA membership and LCIS insurance coverage with attendees. Highlights of the trade show were when President/CEO Kim Ayala tried on a safety helmet "just to be one of the guys," and when John Grise, President of Alder Landscape Services, Inc. won the big raffle prize – a really neat tool chest barbecue. Congratulations to the lucky winner!



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KIM AYALA
President / CEO

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Congratulations to All the CLCA Award Winners!

I would like to congratulate all the 2010 CLCA Landscape Award winners. It was nice to see a lot of familiar faces at this year's Trophy Awards Show in Anaheim. It turned out to be an excellent red carpet event. It is always interesting to see the photos of the completed projects. It's a nice visual instead of only imagining what type of pickup truck, backhoe or mower we insure.

It's that time of year again, **REBATE TIME**. Even with the severe recession we have all experienced, I am pleased to announce that LCIS will once again be paying a rebate. This year we will pay a 3% rebate for the premiums billed in 2009. Over the last 20 plus years LCIS has paid over **36 Million Dollars** in rebates. Look for your check at the beginning of December.

If you are not currently insured with LCIS or a member of CLCA, LCIS and CLCA will pay your first year's CLCA membership dues if you obtain insurance through us.

As the year comes to an end I would like to wish everyone a very Happy Holiday Season and a prosperous New Year! Thank you for your business. – *Kim Ayala*

MISSION STATEMENT

"To provide quality insurance products at competitive prices, along with superior service through our commitment of excellence to our customers and employees."

Client Testimonial – LCIS Professionalism Praised

"This was a no-brainer decision for me this year. The work comp rates issued are very competitive with a modest increase to last year's, and I certainly enjoy the decrease with the package rates. And just as important, this was an easy decision for me as the trust that we have built over the years has really solidified this relationship, and I appreciate that.

"It's a pleasure doing business with LCIS and more specifically with Elizabeth Ngo and Gil Gonzalez; it's refreshing to know that they will follow through EVERY time."

– *Pierre R. Marizco, Marizco Landscape Management, Inc.*

Making a Difference! LCIS Employee Recognition Program

If one of our employees has made a positive difference by providing outstanding service and deserves recognition, please let us know.

E-mail your comments to: **Ethan Brown, Human Resources – ebrown@lcisinc.com, or call us at (800) 628-8735**



Happy Anniversary to the Following Employees:

JULY

Connie Bringetto 7 years
Lera Pedrizzetti 4 years
Kim Saenz 7 years

AUGUST

Connie Carpenter 9 years
Ashley Long 4 years
Elizabeth Ngo 4 years
Claudette Stockbridge 5 yrs

SEPTEMBER

Fran Barker 7 years
Sabrina Drake 2 years
Stacy Manning 7 years
Tina Schulze 3 years
Vivian Garcia 15 years
Terry Mahlman 10 years
Debbie Kirby 8 years
Mike Dunn 13 years

OCTOBER

Janet Schoenfeld 5 years

NOVEMBER

Sharon Barroca 6 years
Debbie Cerkueira 8 years
Benita Hall 4 years
Ramon Simpson 6 years

DECEMBER

Rosario Bustos 4 years
Sharmane Jones 10 years
Rhonda Scow 9 years

Contact Us

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Employee Spotlight



Pamela Severson, Accounting Department, began working at LCIS in November 2009, but brings with her 29 years' worth of accounting and 25 years of insurance experience, having worked 22 years with the same agency as an Accounting

"I like to step back and look at the big picture to find the solution..."

Supervisor. She also has extensive experience in Quality Control, Procedures and Workflow as well as software analysis as it relates to accounting and sales, having played a leading role in three major software conversions over the years.

In her spare time, Pamela enjoys photography, music, computers, traveling and spending time with her loving husband and two teen-aged children.

Victoria Anderson, Account Manager,

just began working for LCIS this July; however, she has been in the insurance industry for over 10 years. She looks forward to building relationships with LCIS customers and with fellow employees. Being knowledgeable about insurance coverage



"I look forward to building relationships with LCIS customers and with fellow employees."

and procedures is important to Victoria. She has earned various industry designations: AIS (Associate in Insurance Services), CISR (Certified Insurance Service Representative), and the CPIW (Certified Professional Insurance Woman). Victoria is also an active member of Insurance Women of Fresno and was awarded the title of "Rookie of the Year" in 2004. She also was First- Runner-Up in the National Association of Insurance Women state level speech competition in 2009.



TERRY MAHLMAN
Business Development Manager

WC GURU

Catching Up with New WC Developments

It has been a while, so let's catch you up on California Workers' Compensation...

WC Rates – What's in store for 2011? WC rates continue to slowly increase. In 2009, the WCIRB proposed a 22.8% increase in the advisory rates. The Insurance Commissioner rejected the proposal and carriers took small-to-moderate increases throughout 2010. This year, the WCIRB has once again proposed a large increase of 27.7% in the advisory rates. Indications are that the Insurance Commissioner will also reject the proposal and that carriers will increase rates 5-10% for 2011. LCIS continues to compare rates for our various WC markets to come up with the best value available for each of our customers.

Experience Rating – There were multiple changes to the experience rating plan for 2010 that caused some employers to have higher experience modifications than in prior years. Good news this year is that the calculation process is not changing. However, effective January 1, 2011, the experience modification worksheets will include the employer's "loss free mod" showing the best possible experience modification that the employer would have received if no losses occurred. The difference between the actual mod and the loss free mod would be the amount that is "controllable" by employer safety programs promoting accident prevention. For more details on the experience modification process, please refer to LCIS newsletters of 7/06 and 8/06, available at our website. If you would like an explanation of your experience modification, please feel free to contact me.

Revised CA WC Posting Notices/Forms – Effective October 8, 2010, California employers must: 1) post revised Workers' Compensation posting notices (DWC-7); 2) distribute an updated version of the new hire pamphlet to employees hired on or after that date; 3) utilize the revised DWC-1 Claim Form/Notice of Potential Eligibility when an employee reports a work injury; and 4) post Medical Provider Network (MPN) notices – if the employer has implemented the MPN process. Your insurance carrier, as well as LCIS, has previously communicated the changes to be implemented and has sent out sample copies of the DWC-1 and DWC-7 forms. At press time, Tower Select is finishing off a second mailing that will include copies of the *Facts About Workers' Compensation* brochures that you need to provide to all newly hired employees. Please contact Judi Smith or myself if you need assistance.

Alternative WC Solutions – LCIS now has the ability to offer a PEO solution for WC and HR/Payroll Services needs. PEOs (Professional Employer Organizations) utilize co-employment agreements to cost-effectively outsource human resources, payroll and workers' compensation. The PEO client (you) is able to focus on the core elements of his/her business in order to maintain or grow the bottom line. The PEO client is able to make all the key decisions needed in order to direct and run the business (including hiring, firing, directing work, disciplining, setting salaries, etc.), but the HR, payroll, payroll tax compliance and unemployment claims are handled by the PEO. In addition to offering "standard" WC coverage, we will offer the PEO option to customers where there is a good fit for a PEO.

Indications are... that carriers will increase rates 5-10% for 2011.

For additional information, visit the LCIS Website:

www.lcisinc.com

'Thanks a Million' Contest Winners Announced!!!

LCIS would like to congratulate the winners of its first two "Thanks a Million" drawings. Here's how the contest works: When you returned your renewal information by the date noted on your renewal information packet and you return your "Thanks a Million" bill with your business name and phone number, you are entered in our "Thanks a Million" drawing. The prize is a \$50.00 gift card and there are five winners chosen each quarter.

The first drawing was held in August for third quarter 2010 renewals. The winners were:

- Queco, Inc. of Sonoma, CA
- Corbella Landscape of San Diego, CA
- Dave Reynolds Landscapes of Riverside, CA
- Green-Tek Landscape of Valencia, CA
- Cortland Landscape Construction, Inc. of Arroyo Grande, CA

The fourth quarter 2010 renewal winners are:
 Green Leaf Tree Care, Inc. of San Diego, CA
 Taylor Made Landscape Construction of Saugus, CA
 Lesaca Landscape of Bakersfield, CA
 Hydrosprout, Inc. of Escondido, CA
 Martinez Landscape Co., Inc. of Sylmar, CA

We would like to thank all who have returned their renewal information packet to us by the requested date. This helps us keep our work flowing smoothly, enables us to provide our carriers with a submission and provide you with a proposal in a timely manner.

We at LCIS thank you for your business!

VISIT US AT THE LIS SHOW
Jan. 12-13 – L.A. Convention Center
LCIS will be in booths 2034 and 2036
Enter to win a toolbox barbeque set!

Spreading the Good News



SFX SPEAKER Doug Carter (fourth from left) was sponsored by LCIS this past June. Shown at the San Jose event are LCIS team members David Bloodgood, Jerry Elson, Nelson Colvin, Kim Ayala and Terry Mahlman.



LANDSCAPE EXPO show in Long Beach in October drew LCIS representatives Jerry Elson, Kim Ayala, Terry Mahlman, David Bloodgood, Dan Dvorak and Oscar Montano (and that nifty barbeque).



LAUGHING UP A STORM at the November CLCA Convention in Anaheim's Disneyland Hotel is Humor Therapist and Keynoter Elaine Lundberg (right), with her LCIS sponsors Jerry Elson, Dan Dvorak, Kim Ayala, David Bloodgood, Nelson Colvin and Terry Mahlman.



CLCA CONVENTION activities also included a visit from Mickey and Minnie Mouse. Enjoying the Magic Kingdom are LCIS team members Kim Ayala and daughter Ashley Husong.

Safety Tips of the Quarter

HOLIDAYS 2010

Keeping Safe This Winter

By Bridget Miller, El Dorado Communications, Inc.

Blizzards? Freezing rain and hail? Weeks at a time with below freezing temps? Just because much of California doesn't experience the extremes we see on the news doesn't mean that we can ignore the changing seasons when it comes to watching our safety. There are still plenty of seasonal hazards to be aware of this winter.

December marks the start of the winter weather, but is also a time of holidays and celebrations. We've just started the season for more rain and the occasional dip into downright cold temperatures. More rain can mean more danger of floods. This combination means more hazards to be aware of – both inside and outside.

SAFETY TIPS AT YOUR HOME OR OFFICE

- Be sure to have safeguards in place at your home and business, such as rubber mats in areas that may become slippery when wet.
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) also has some good advice on flood preparedness:
 - Know safe routes from your most traveled destinations
 - Ensure your flood insurance policy is up to date
 - Do not try to walk or drive across flooded areas. If your car stalls and you can abandon it, do so immediately and seek higher ground.
- Have a safety kit available in your home or office in case of a flood or power outage. Safety kits might include: first aid kit, canned foods and can opener, radio, drinking water, flashlight, extra batteries for both the radio and flashlight, and blankets.
- Some holiday plants, such as poinsettias and mistletoe, are actually poisonous. Take care to ensure that these are not accidentally ingested, especially by children.
- Holiday decorations also present some risks, either from breaking or from being swallowed by small children. As best you can, keep kids and pets away from them.

- Candles are often used during holiday celebrations. Be sure to keep your home or office safe by keeping them away from children.



- Speaking of fire hazards, if you didn't check your smoke detector batteries during the time change in November, now is a good time to replace them.

WHILE WORKING...

- Keep hands and skin in good shape by wearing gloves.
- Bring a thermos to work with a warm beverage or soup to keep your temperature up while working outside in cold weather.

WHILE DRIVING...

- Early morning frost or even ice is possible in some areas; plan accordingly. Especially if you're going to be driving at night or in the early morning, be aware that black ice can form on the road, causing loss of control of a vehicle in a hurry.
- Allow more distance on wet roadways between you and other vehicles.
- You should also carry a car or truck safety kit, which might include flares or emergency triangles, etc. If it snows in your area, also include abrasive material such as sand, salt or non-clumping cat litter, and a small shovel to free the vehicle if it becomes stuck in snow or mud.
- Fog can also be prevalent. The CHP offers these fog driving safety tips:

- Drive with lights on LOW beam. High beams will reflect off the fog, creating a "white wall" effect. Avoid crossing traffic lanes.
- Travel with the driver's window partially open. Listen for traffic.
- If your car is disabled or you can't continue, pull well onto the shoulder and turn off lights. Move away from your vehicle.
- Check road conditions often by calling the Caltrans Road Conditions Hotline: 1-800-427-ROAD (1-800-427-7623).
- Winterize your car by checking the brakes, defroster, heater, exhaust, lights and tires.
- Keep a full gas tank, which will allow you the leeway to turn around if you encounter bad conditions without worrying about having enough gas to get home.
- Holidays present a lot of opportunities to celebrate, but drinking and driving should never be part of the celebration. Always have a designated sober driver or call a taxi.

Bridget Miller is a freelance writer and Human Resources expert who house sits all over the globe. She submitted this story from Hawaii, of all places!



Bridget Miller

Safety Tips Wanted!

Do you have some safety tips that have made a difference for your company? Send them to LCIS at the address below, ATTN: Editor, and they might appear as future Safety Tips of the Month to share with your fellow CLCA members.

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Manteniendo la Seguridad en el Invierno

Por Bridget Miller, El Dorado Communications, Inc.

Tormentas de Nieve? ¿Lluvias heladas y granizo? ¿Semanas con temperaturas bajo cero? Solo por el hecho de que gran parte de California no presenta estos extremos en las temperaturas que vemos en las noticias no quiere decir que podemos ignorar los cambios de estaciones cuando se trata de cuidar nuestra seguridad. Todavía hay muchos peligros de la temporada invernal que debemos tener en cuenta.

Diciembre marca el principio del invierno, pero también es tiempo de celebraciones y días feriados. Acabamos de empezar la temporada de más lluvia y de bajas pronunciadas en la temperatura. Más lluvia puede significar más peligro de inundaciones. Ésta combinación significa más riesgos para tener en cuenta – tanto dentro como fuera del sitio de trabajo.

CONSEJOS DE SEGURIDAD PARA SU CASA U OFICINA

- Asegúrese de tomar precauciones en algunos lugares de su casa y oficina, tales como alfombras de goma en las áreas que pueden volverse resbaladizas cuando se mojan.
- La Agencia Federal de Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA) también tiene algunos buenos consejos sobre cómo prepararse en inundaciones.
 - Conozca las rutas seguras hacia los destinos que más viaja.
 - Asegúrese que su póliza de seguro contra inundaciones esté al día.
 - No trate de caminar o conducir a través de áreas inundadas. Si su auto se detiene, usted debe abandonarlo inmediatamente y busque un lugar alto.
- Mantenga un equipo de seguridad disponible en su casa u oficina para casos de inundación o corte de suministro de energía. El equipo de seguridad puede incluir: un botiquín de primeros auxilios, comida enlatada y abrelatas, un radio, agua potable, linterna, baterías extras para la radio y la linterna, y colchas.
- Algunas plantas como la Estrella Federal y el Muérdago son venenosas. Asegúrese que estas plantas no sean ingeridas especialmente por niños.

- Los adornos de navidad también presentan algunos riesgos, ya sea en el caso de que se quiebren o que sean ingeridos por niños pequeños. Lo mejor que usted puede hacer es mantener fuera del alcance de estos a los niños y mascotas.



- Las velas son usadas frecuentemente en estas celebraciones. Mantenga su casa u oficina segura manteniendo las velas fuera del alcance de los niños
- Hablando de los peligros de fuego, si usted no chequeo las baterías de su detector de humo durante el cambio de hora, ahora es un buen tiempo para hacerlo.

MIENTRAS TRABAJA...

- Mantenga sus manos y su piel en buen estado usando guantes.
- Lleve a su trabajo un termo con bebidas o sopas tibias para mantener su temperatura mientras está trabajando expuesto a bajas temperaturas.

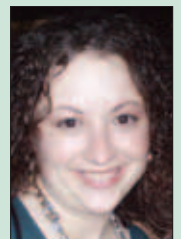
MIENTRAS MANEJA...

- Es posible encontrar escarcha o hielo por la mañana temprano en algunas áreas; planifique en consecuencia. Sobre todo si va a conducir por la noche o temprano en la mañana, tenga en cuenta que puede formarse hielo en el camino, causando la pérdida del control del vehículo que va a toda prisa.
- Cuando la ruta esta mojada mantenga una mayor distancia entre los otros vehículos y el suyo.
- También deben llevar un equipo de seguridad en su auto o camión, que pueda incluir bengalas o triángulos de emergencia, etc. Si nieva en su área, también incluya mate-

riales abrasivos como arena, sal o piedritas para gatos que no se aglutinen, y una pala pequeña para liberar el vehículo si se queda atrapado en la nieve o barro.

- La niebla también puede aparecer a menudo. CHP ofrece estos consejos de seguridad:
 - Maneje con las luces bajas encendidas. Las luces altas se reflejan en la niebla, creando un efecto de "pared blanca." Evite cruzar los carriles de tráfico.
 - Maneje con la ventanilla del conductor parcialmente abierta. Escuche el tráfico.
 - Si su carro esta deshabilitado o no puede continuar, muévase a la banquina lo más que pueda. Apague las luces y aléjese de su vehículo.
 - Verifique las condiciones del camino a menudo llamando a Caltrans Road Conditions Hotline al: 1-800-427-ROAD (1-800-427-7623).
 - Prepare su carro para el invierno chequeando los frenos, el desempañador, calentador, escape, luces y llantas.
 - Mantenga el tanque de combustible lleno, esto le dará libertad de acción para volverse y buscar otro camino si encuentra malas condiciones sin tener que preocuparse por tener suficiente gas para llegar a casa.
 - Los días feriados nos dan un montón de oportunidades para celebrar, pero beber y manejar nunca debería ser parte de la celebración. Siempre tenga un conductor sobrio designado o llame a un taxi.

Bridget Miller es una escritora independiente cuya su casa se encuentra alrededor de todo el mundo. ¡Una experta en recursos humanos, ella presentó esta historia desde Hawái!



Bridget Miller

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