

Northeast Claims Management Committee Recommendations

The following represent the five most common categories adversely effecting car wash claims throughout the country. The purpose of this exercise is to offer a proactive approach to help prevent these types of accidents from occurring. The following is a list of recommendations from the committee offering some corrective actions that, if implemented, should accomplish this objective.

SLIPS & FALLS

Each incident should be recorded regardless of whether an insurance claim is made. These reports should be kept on file for at least one year. Filing by accident date may make it easier to retrieve the information at a later date.

This procedure helps gather the missing information to defend a case that may not arrive for several months: i.e. witnesses, conditions of premises, other circumstances leading to the accident.

Documentation of each incident:

- Salt logs
- Photos
- Daily Premises Inspection Reports

This information helps aid the company in the event the need to defend a case arises that is not the fault of the operator.

CRIME

Our investigations revealed that most of the losses in this area were a result of damage to the equipment during an attempted theft.

Each operator should consider the following options to minimize the claims associated with the condition:

- Workable central station alarm systems
- Security Cameras
- Use of tokens
- Drop safes
- Signage announcing use of tokens, alarm systems, and anything to show minimal cash exposure
- Exceptional lighting
- Daily deposits
- Leave cash drawers open and empty at night
- Lights on in the vending area inside the building
- Bolted safes

DAMAGE TO CUSTOMER VEHICLES

Most of the damage to customer vehicles is a result of prior damage. The following suggestions will help determine whether it was our error and help us document any existing conditions.

- Inspect each vehicle for prior damage. Enforce strict rules that require the employee to prevent any vehicle with loose parts from entering the wash. Check for after market parts such as pick-ups with plow rigs.
- Inspect all damage and document

- Employees and operators should seriously consider paying for any damage they cause. Insurance was not intended for these types of maintenance claims. A preponderance of these losses could cause significant rate increases and/or availability problems in the future.
- A questionnaire should be used to properly document each case.
- Attempt to offer assistance to the customer first. Train your employees to be helpful in their investigation process.
- Keep equipment maintenance logs.
- Use photos whenever practical.
- Investigate all occurrences to determine if a change in procedure is warranted.

EMPLOYEE ERROR

Our reviews of these claims concluded that most of these accidents could have been avoided with proper training. The following represent our collective ideas to help establish a pro-active method of addressing this issue.

- Provide constant and consistent training for all employees. This should include monthly safety meetings. Consider assigning a different employee each month to conduct the meeting to keep everyone involved and focused.
- Designate specific drivers, they should be identified by a different color shirt or uniform to be easily identified.
- Check motor vehicle records on each driver on a regular basis.
- Provide some incentive programs.
- Make all managers accountable for the success of all safety programs.

EMPLOYEE INJURIES

Our analysis of this group of losses found that workers were injured mostly because of lack of attention or performing duties they were unfamiliar with. The following are our recommendations to help minimize these conditions in the future.

- Monthly safety meetings.
- Restrict workers to their designated area of expertise.
- Enforce a zero accident culture. Let all of your employees know that you expect an accident free environment.
- Provide constant and consistent training to all employees.