



NC LEAGUE
OF MUNICIPALITIES
RISK MANAGEMENT SERVICES

HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST | WORKERS' COMPENSATION | PROPERTY & LIABILITY

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FLOOR GRATES - A POTENTIAL FOR SERIOUS INJURY

Two recent incidents involving employees who have fallen through floor grates prompts the need for municipalities to review and inspect similar areas for signs of potential injuries. Total workers' compensation costs for these incidents is well over \$85,000, including lost time and medical costs. These two incidents both occurred in water treatment facilities, where there are numerous walking surfaces which are covered with open grid-work (so-called "subway" or "sidewalk grating"). These are not uncommon throughout North Carolina. Other facilities may also have this type of walking surface.

Both incidents involved the sudden failure of the grates and/or supporting surfaces for the grates. Both incidents resulted in serious injuries to the employees as a result of the fall into the area below the grates. One employee fell 18 feet and the other fell 24 feet.

In both cases, the grates had been in place for several years subsequent to the facilities' being opened. In neither case had anyone ever inspected the grating to determine if there was any unusual wear or weakness in the grating or supporting structure.

Risk Management Services suggests you inspect all of your walking and working surfaces on a regular basis. Document these inspections and correct any deficiencies which have been noted. Pay particular attention to the support system to insure that it is not worn, rusted, or otherwise physically damaged. Look closely at the grating itself. Is the grating bent or warped? Has the grating been run over by heavy equipment? Are large pieces of equipment or electrical motors placed on the grating? Are welds loose or disconnected? Have these welds become cracked or broken? Do you have documentation from the installer to indicate the maximum load capacity for the grating? Have any repairs been made in the past? Is there a record of these repairs? Have any sections of grating been replaced? If so, why? Is there a plan to replace grating?

For additional information contact risk management services at **1- 800-228-0986** and select **“safety and risk control”** from the available options.

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