

# **Risk Management Techniques for Reducing Sewer Backup Liability**

**Live Training**

**Dates: Varies**

**Length: 60 Minutes**

## **Description**

This session will address the importance of appropriate sewer backup response techniques. Topics also include the importance of reporting and documentation methods, sewer claims information, various aspects of liability exposures, and court requirements to lessen or eliminate liability exposures. Attendees will also receive sewer policy resources and information on claims reporting and investigation procedures.

## **Course Outline**

### **1. Introduction & Session Objectives (5 minutes)**

- a. Welcome attendees
- b. Introduce presenters
- c. Overview of session goals:
- d. Understanding sewer backup risks
- e. Learning liability considerations
- f. Implementing prevention & response strategies

### **2. Why Proper Sewer Management Matters (10 minutes)**

- a. Public Impact
  - i. Customer complaints
  - ii. Damage to public image & officials facing criticism
  - iii. Contentious claims
- b. Financial Impact
  - i. CIS sewer claims statistics since 2000
  - ii. Breakdown of claims over the past three years
  - iii. Costs associated with sewer backups

### **3. Understanding Liability (10 minutes)**

- a. Strict Liability vs. Ordinary Negligence
  - i. Just because the CITY/County owns it doesn't mean it's liable
  - ii. Negligence is when claims are paid
- b. Determining Fault
  - i. Key questions:

1. What was done wrong?
  2. Did the response meet expectations?
  3. Were policies followed?
- c. Common Causes of Liability
- i. Failure to inspect/maintain
  - ii. Lack of response
  - iii. Faulty design/construction
  - iv. System deterioration

#### **4. Risk Reduction Strategies (10 minutes)**

- a. Sewer System Standards
- i. Regular cleaning schedules (every 3-5 years)
  - ii. Video inspection every 10 years
  - iii. Action steps for addressing identified issues
  - iv. Budget concerns—engaging leadership for funding
- b. Incident Prevention & Community Education
- i. Educating the public on 'Do Not Flush' items
  - ii. Providing resources for community awareness
  - iii. Ordinances and enforcement

#### **5. Incident Response Plan (15 minutes)**

- a. Why Have a Response Plan?
- i. Improves customer service
  - ii. Reduces claims & liability exposure
  - iii. Provides consistency in responses
- b. Key Components of an Incident Response Plan
- i. Written policy & procedures
  - ii. Internal training for responders
  - iii. Documentation & record-keeping
  - iv. Identifying responsible parties (staff, contractors, agencies)
- c. Handling Customer Claims
- i. Protecting property & mitigating damages
  - ii. Advising residents to contact their insurance
  - iii. Documenting claims for adjusters
- d. Special Cases & Community Communication
- i. Emergency scenarios
  - ii. High-risk locations (hospitals, jails, restaurants)
  - iii. Utilizing media, websites, & billing notices

#### **6. CIS Resources & Wrap-Up (10 minutes)**

- a. Training & Grants Available
- i. CIS Sewer & Water Leak Brochure
  - ii. Sample policies & forms
  - iii. Sewer Camera Grant (January 2025)

- b. Continuing Education Credits
- c. Q&A & Closing Remarks

### **Instructor Bio\***

\*Please note that each of our safety managers does this training, I have provided each of their bios however they do not present this together.

#### **Katie Durfee**

Katie Durfee joined CIS as a risk management consultant in April 2017. Katie came to CIS from Oregon City where she served in the city manager's office, overseeing risk management, claims and the coordination of emergency preparedness training. Prior to joining Oregon City, Katie served as a Chief Deputy County Clerk for Valley County, Idaho and managed the County's Risk Management program. She has previously served as the President for the Idaho Chapter of PRIMA, as well as participated on several National PRIMA committees, including the Leadership Development Committee. Katie has more

than eleven years of local government experience. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business

#### **Lisa Masters**

Lisa Masters is the Senior Risk Management Consultant for the eastern Oregon region. She has over 26 years of experience working with public entities and 19 years working in safety, workers' compensation, risk management and the insurance industries. Her work experience includes working in the risk management and underwriting departments at SAIF Corporation, as a Loss Control Consultant at the ESD 112 in Southwest Washington, the Risk Manager of Jackson County, and the Personnel/Safety Manager for Southern Oregon Head Start. Lisa's education includes a Bachelor of Science degree from Oregon State University in Business Management and an Associate in Risk Management designation.

#### **Dustin Karstetter**

Dustin Karstetter, MBA, is a seasoned professional with extensive experience in the public sector, particularly in municipal management and public works. He has held key roles such as City Administrator for the City of Boardman, Oregon, and Public Works Director for the City of Umatilla, Oregon. Dustin's expertise encompasses strategic planning, infrastructure development, and community engagement. He earned his Master of Business Administration from Western Governors University, equipping him with a strong foundation in business and leadership. Throughout his career, Dustin has

demonstrated a commitment to enhancing municipal operations and fostering sustainable community growth.

### **Katie Vorderstrasse**

CIS Sr. Risk Management Consultant Katie Vorderstrasse has worked in the insurance and risk management industry for 19 years. Her work experience includes serving as the Assistant Director of Insurance and Risk Management for Oregon State University, the Risk Manager for the Salem-Keizer school district, and several years working for Liberty Mutual Insurance Company in a variety of roles primarily focused on claims. Katie's education includes a bachelor's degree in business administration with a minor in economics from George Fox University. She also has an Associate in Risk Management (ARM), Associate in Claims (AIC), and Chartered Property Casualty Underwriting (CPCU) designation from The Institutes. In addition to her expertise in the insurance and risk management industry, Katie is a Black Belt in Six Sigma and holds a certification in Change Management. She enjoys using these professional disciplines together to effectively manage risk, working with the cities and counties of Oregon. Katie's favorite thing to do outside of work is spend time with her family, where she frequently has an opportunity to use her risk management skills with her very active and adventurous children.

### **Margaret Ryan**

Margaret Ryan is the Senior Risk Management Consultant for the northern region of the state. She has over 18 years of city and county government experience in the areas of law enforcement, property and evidence, corrections, and risk management. Margaret is passionate about keeping the people that serve our communities safe and healthy and in fighting form for pickleball when they retire. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice and Psychology from Washington State University Vancouver (Go Cougs!) and Associate of Risk Management Designation and is a continual learner that always has a class or book humming in the background to keep her learning about our changing risky world. Margaret's favorite time-off adventures are visiting her daughter in NYC or her son in her hometown of Chicago, go Cubs!