

THE PAR PLAN NEWS

ISSUE 112

APRIL 2013



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The Michigan Township Participating Plan's Risk Reduction Grant Program is well received by membership.

The Board of Directors are pleased to advise our membership that our current grant cycle is now open for applications. Grant requests are being accepted April 1, 2013 through May 31, 2013.

The MTPP, your property and casualty insurance provider, is a unique and proven member driven program providing tailored insurance coverage's to Michigan public entities. Established in 1985 and now in its 28th year of operation, the program's board of directors, comprised of public officials just like you, continue to monitor the program to determine how and what can be done to help our membership maintain their long-term obligations to their communities.

Our Risk Reduction Grant Program (RRGP) further allows the Par Plan to continue to partner with its members and foster cooperation in an effective risk management and loss control program. The RRGP has been established to assist members in reducing specific risk exposures and to assist our members in their efforts of applying effective risk management techniques.

If you haven't taken advantage of this program you should. Visit our website at www.theparplan.com, select the RRGP button and download all information necessary to begin your process. Once complete, grant applications may be forwarded to the Par Plan Administrative office via e-mail at mtprrgp@kenrickcorp.com. Or mail to:

Michigan Township Participating Plan—Risk Reduction Grant Program
Attention: Administrator
1700 Opdyke Court, Auburn Hills, Michigan 48326
No applications will be accepted via fax

The Par Plan is now accepting grant applications for the April 1st through May 31st, 2013 cycle of grants to be approved at the July 2013 annual business meeting.

MTPP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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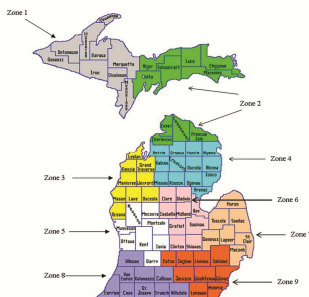
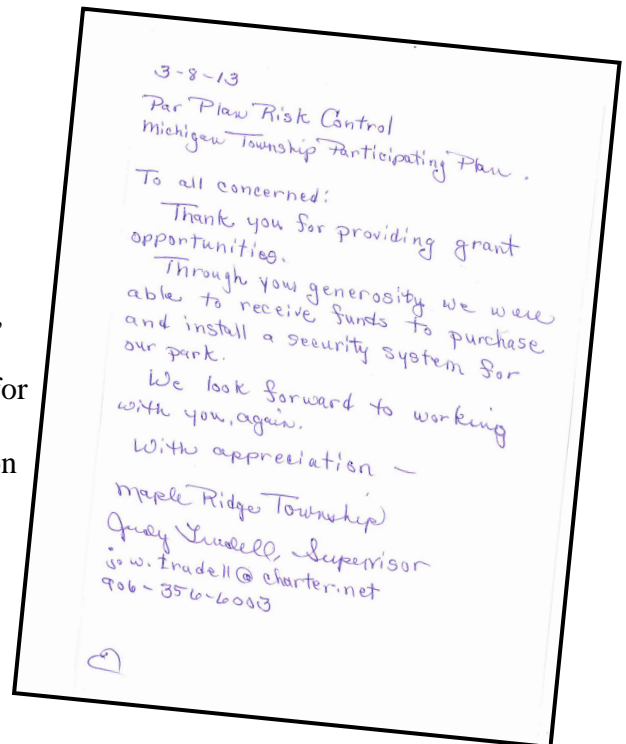
Notifications of grant awards or non-awards is expected to be made within sixty (60) days of your application due date. Below is the timeline for qualifying and approving grants:

- April 1 through May 31, 2013 – grant applications accepted
- June 12 through 14, 2013 – MTPP Grant Committee reviews and qualify applications
- July 11, 2013 – Qualify and non-qualifying applications receive full board approval
- July 29 through 31, 2013 – Grant award and non-award notifications forwarded to applicants

If you have further questions regarding the grant process, feel free to contact your Par Plan zone director listed at the left, your local regional risk manager, or Rita Evans of the Par Plan administrative office at 800-783-1370 for further assistance.

remember...
"The Par Plan is Public Officials serving Public Officials"

With much appreciation Judy Trudell, Supervisor of Maple Ridge Township, Delta County, took the time out of her busy schedule to thank the Par Plan for providing the opportunity to participate in the Risk Reduction Grant program.



Par Plan News Editorial Staff:

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Marvin Besteman, Jr. - Kinross Charter Township, Chippewa County
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The Par Plan News is published by the Michigan Township Participating Plan's Program Administrator:

Michigan Township Participating Plan UPCOMING BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

During the next several months, member representatives will be electing Zone Representatives to serve on the Par Plan Board of Directors. This year Zones 3, 6, 9 are up for regular election with representatives serving three year terms. Zones up for election consist of the following counties:

Zone 3: Benzie, Grand Traverse, Lake, Leelanau, Manistee, Mason, Oceana, Osceola, Wexford

Zone 6: Bay, Clare, Clinton, Gladwin, Gratiot, Isabella, Midland, Saginaw, Shiawassee

Zone 9: Eaton, Ingham, Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston, Monroe, Oakland, Washtenaw, Wayne

Each member of the Par Plan should designate a person to serve as their member representative. Only member representatives are eligible to serve on the Par Plan Board of Directors. A completed nomination form, conflict disclosure statement and resolution confirming membership are required to be submitted to participate in the Michigan Township Participating Plan's Board of Directors election.


According to the Par Plan Bylaws: Member shall mean a local unit of government participating in the Michigan Township Participating Plan. Member representative shall mean the member representative to the Par Plan. A member representative must be an elected official of the unit of government that is a member of the Par Plan. If the unit of government does not have elected officials, a member from the Board of that unit of government may be its member representative to the Par Plan.

Appointed officials such as City Managers, Township Superintendents or DPW Superintendents are not eligible. Units of government that would not have elected officials might be fire authorities and library boards.

If you are uncertain of your eligibility to run for the Zone Director or the procedure to vote, please contact William Walters the Chairman of the Election Committee at (810) 346-2043, or Rita Evans at the Par Plan office (800) 783-1370.

The winner is selected based upon the highest number of votes received. Elected positions will be for a three-year term and will require elected Directors to attend at least (4) four board meetings per year in addition to committee meetings.

You will be receiving a nomination form along with the election required documentation in the mail. If you wish your nomination form to receive consideration, please return the nomination form and all required documentation no later than May 3rd to the Michigan Township Participating Plan, 1700 Opdyke Court, Auburn Hills, Michigan 48326.

 The election committee has set the following election timetable:

- April 5th** - Nomination and election forms mailed to zone members
- May 3rd** - Nomination and election forms must be postmarked to receive consideration
- May 10th** - Confirm nomination and election forms confirmed by committee
- May 31st** - Election ballots mailed to all zone members
- June 20th** - Election ballots must be postmarked to receive consideration
- June 26th** - Election ballots counted and winning candidates confirmed by committee
- July 11th** - Par Plan Annual Business Meeting

PUBLIC PLAYGROUND SAFETY

By Rita Evans, Vice President MTPP Risk Control

Are exposures hiding in your playground?



In the time it will take you to read this article a child will be severely injured and admitted to an emergency room as a result of a playground related accident. It is estimated that each year over 170,000 such injuries occur and approximately twenty children will die from playground related injuries. (National Playground Safety Institute).

Summer will soon be in full swing and by now most entities are making the necessary preparations for the opening of your parks and playgrounds in your communities. Not only is this the time to make ascetic changes such as painting, it is also the time to make your playground equipment safer by repairing and replacing worn and broken equipment.

There are many kinds of public playgrounds in use today as well as a wide variety of equipment available. The most recent trends are toward innovative play spaces that may include adventure and nature activities and splash pads. Although unique and unconventional equipment may be prevalent in some communities; many of us rely on the traditional swings, slides, spring animals, and climbing apparatus. No matter what type of playground equipment your community has, safety should be the main concern.

Children will use playground equipment in unpredictable ways, increasing the chance of injury. This article highlights the basic areas of exposure, as well as risk control techniques that will assist you in reducing the frequency and severity of playground accidents.

General hazards of playground equipment are:



Improper Protective Surfacing - The surface or ground under and around the playground should be soft enough to cushion a fall. Improper surfacing material under playground equipment is the leading cause of playground related injuries.

Acceptable surfaces that offer protection from falls are hardwood fiber/mulch, sand and pea gravel, synthetic or rubber tiles and mats. Surfaces must be maintained at a depth of twelve inches, be free of standing water and debris and not be allowed to become impacted.

Inadequate Fall Zone - A fall zone or use zone area under and around the playground equipment should be covered with protective surfacing material and extended a minimum of six feet in all directions from the edge of the stationary equipment.

For example, the fall zone at the bottom or exit area of the slide should extend six feet from the end of the slide for slides 4 feet or less in height. Swings would require a much greater area for the fall zone, and should extend two times the height or pivot of the swing hanger.



Protrusion & Entanglement Hazards - A protrusion hazard is a component or piece of hardware that might be capable of impaling or cutting a child if a child should fall against the hazard. Protrusions are also capable of catching strings or items of clothing that might be worn by the child.

Some protrusion and entanglement hazards include bolt ends extending out beyond the face of the nut, hardware that form a hook or leave a gap or space between components and open "S" type hooks.

Entrapment Openings - Enclosed openings on playground equipment. Children often enter openings feet first and attempt to slide through the opening that is large enough to allow the body to pass through but could entrap the head.

Pay special attention to openings at the top of the slide, openings between platforms and openings on climbers where the distance between rungs might be less than nine inches.

Insufficient Equipment Spacing - Improper spacing between pieces of playground equipment can cause overcrowding of a play area which may create several hazards.

There should be a minimum of twelve feet between two play structures. This provides room for children to circulate and prevents the possibility of a child falling off of one structure and striking another structure.



Trip Hazards - Trip hazards are created by play structure components or items on the playground.

Exposed concrete footings, tree roots, tree stumps, rocks and abrupt changes in surface elevations are all common trip hazards that are often found in play environments.

Pinch, Crush, Shearing, and Sharp Edges - Components on the playground equipment should be inspected to make sure there are no sharp edges or points that could cut skin. Equipment should be checked to make sure there are no moving parts or mechanisms that might crush or pinch a child's finger.

Platforms with no Guardrails - Elevated surfaces such as platforms, ramps, and bridgways should have guardrails that would prevent accidental falls.

Lack of Supervision - Young children are constantly challenging their own abilities, very often not being able to recognize potential hazards.

It is important for the parent or caregiver to make sure that the child is using age appropriate equipment in the playground. Areas for preschool children should be separate from areas intended for school age children.

In order for playgrounds to remain in "safe" condition a program of regular and frequent inspections and preventative maintenance must be present. There should be no missing, broken or worn-out components. All hardware should be secure. The wood, metal, or plastic should not show signs of fatigue or deterioration. All parts should be stable with no apparent signs of loosening and surfacing material must also be maintained.

A simple checklist that includes what hazard has been found, the date it was first observed and the date it was repaired will help you reduce the potential physical injury and liability hazard.

The Michigan Township Participating Plan Risk Control Services is available to assist you with additional resources regarding playground safety. Please contact us at 1-800-536-7425.

The Michigan Township Participating Plan's April 2013 quarterly meeting will be held on Friday, April 12th at 9:00 a.m. in the Birch Cedar room located on the second floor of the Kewadin Casino & Convention Center, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.

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www.theparplan.com