

Amy Christine Pechacek

Summary

Results oriented, decisive leader with extensive experience in public sector risk management, loss reduction, claims, civil litigation management, and life safety. Currently the Risk Manager for Lake County, Illinois. Directs the County's self-funded, self-administered operations and oversees all departmental staff and County-wide risk management functions. Manages and administers all excess insurance programs and contractual risk transfer. Previously served as the County's Compliance Officer conducting internal employment and third party defense investigations as well as handled first-line regulatory compliance assurance. Nationally recognized speaker and expert in public sector risk management, including frequent lecturer in defense of police liability cases. Worked as the Director of Investigations for a national private detective firm serving the insurance and defense industries for asset protection and fraud detection. Former licensed Private Detective in both Illinois and Wisconsin.

Professional Experience

Risk Manager

Lake County Government

Waukegan, IL

January/2009 to present

- Directs Lake County's 25 million dollar self-funded, self-administered operations.
- Manages an in-house staff of claims adjusters, analysts, nurse case managers, and administrative support.
- Responsible for life safety, crisis management, and risk assessments for approximately 3,000 employees in high exposure jobs such as law enforcement, corrections, probation, nursing home care, public works, community health, and highway transportation.
- Oversees claims and civil litigation management for over 300 cases annually in all areas of the law including; police liability, medical malpractice, workers' compensation, property, third party liability, employment practices, and contract litigation.
- Manages and administers excess insurance program for all lines of coverage protecting County operations.
- Represents the interests of the County in court proceedings, including settlement conferences at the Industrial Commission, employment arbitrations, and at all state and federal hearings.
- Implements loss control policies and corrective procedures County-wide to minimize exposures.
- Interacts daily with all levels of management such as high-profile elected officials and County Board members.
- Reviews County contracts to ensure proper risk transfer techniques and the protection of Lake County's assets.
- Presents to Lake County Board and the Finance and Administrative Committee on pending litigation, claims for settlements authority, and budgetary matters.
- Researches and secures excess insurance for all lines of coverage including property, general liability, auto liability, cyber liability, medical malpractice, and workers' compensation.
- Manages the coordination of employee leaves County-wide as applicable under the Family Medical Leave Act, Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act, and all other medical and personal leaves of absence.
- Serves as ethics investigator for all complaints of employee compliance issues, ethics violations, and misconduct.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Overhauled entire departmental operating procedures, implemented best practices claim administration standards and new loss investigation requirements in first three months as Risk Manager. Reduced claims 37% in four years compared to historical average and lowered reserves by over eight million through proactive loss prevention and effective case management. Recorded the lowest workers' compensation claims experience in over ten years for Fiscal Year 2011 and Fiscal Year 2012. Chairs the County's Accident Review Board and implemented departmental "Risk Reviews" for the top five claim producing departments, providing training and corrective procedures to reduce claim drivers and minimize future risks.

Compliance Officer

Lake County Government

Waukegan, IL

May/2008 to January/2009

- Initiated defense investigations mitigating potential damages for self-insured public entity by documenting accident scenes, interviewing witnesses, and conducting surveillance.
- Responsible for first-line compliance assurance in accordance to federal and state regulatory requirements in the areas of safety, training, policy, and operational functions.
- Revised internal policies to comply with changes in the Family Medical Leave Act, Occupational Safety Health Administration regulations, Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Illinois Nursing Home Care Act.
- Performed employee misconduct investigations including identifying an employee engaged in insurance fraud, an employee who falsified payroll hours, and an employee who misrepresented their educational credentials. All three subjects were terminated.
- Collaborated with Assistant State's Attorneys, Special Appointed Assistant State's Attorneys, and outside council in the defense development of third party civil litigation, employment practices, medical malpractice, and workers' compensation claims.
- Established the practice of taking recorded statements for the defense of workers compensation claims and identified previously underutilized on-site video resources throughout county property to irrefutably support the defense of claims against Lake County.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Conducted over 100 defense investigations in nine months and substantially mitigated third party exposures. Self-Initiated 10 separate employment investigations resulting in the termination or suspension of seven employees for bribery, theft, fraud, misrepresentation, and conduct unbecoming of a public servant. Reformed internal procedures for safety training and documentation in accordance to Occupational Safety Health Administration regulatory requirements and the Illinois Nursing Home Act. Revised internal policies to be in compliance with changes to the American with Disabilities Act and the Family Medical Leave Act. Promoted to a senior management, division head position after only nine months with organization.

Director of Investigations

TransNet Investigative Services, Inc.

Mount Prospect, IL

May/1999 to May/2008

- Directed the operations of the corporate office of a private investigative firm consisting of a national network of investigators and local administrators.
- Conducted and supervised investigations that include third party liability, workers' compensation, long and short term disability, compensability, subrogation, activities investigations, asset checks, backgrounds, employment checks, location cases, recorded statements, process serving, accident scene photographs, surveillance, and fatalities.
- Provided a variety of investigative services as well as routine customer service to an international client base consisting of over one thousand insurance and self-insured companies, third party administrators, and law firms.
- Communicated the investigative objectives on new assignments with each individual client, and assigned each investigation appropriately based on experience and effectiveness.
- Created new and innovative techniques to develop information on individuals suspected of insurance fraud and provide continuous guidance on the successful execution and completion of all assignments.
- Performed over 500 investigations annually throughout the United States including locations in Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Iowa, and Michigan, while maintaining the ability to acclimate myself to any environment and communicated with individuals in rural, urban, and suburban areas.
- Consulted with clients and defense council for trial strategies with consideration of mitigating and exculpatory facts.
- Trained all new hires and interns in company procedures and investigative techniques.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Promoted from Field Agent to Senior Investigator in one year, further promoted to Investigations Supervisor and subsequently Director of Investigations in less than four years. Created effective training procedures involving field work, mock surveillance assignments, and updates to the company manual based on changes in legislation. Authored investigative reports that were utilized as examples by the corporate owners to attract new clients. Passed state issued exams and met all professional and background requirements for Private Detective Licensure in Illinois (#115-00169) and Wisconsin (#10915-63).

Education

Northwestern University
Masters of Public Policy and Administration

University of Wisconsin - Madison
Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology / Criminal Justice Certificate