



MCIT MISSION:

Providing Minnesota counties and associated members cost-effective coverage with comprehensive and quality risk management services.

Hosting Others' Data? Evaluate These 5 Critical Areas

When done wisely, hosting data for another entity can be mutually beneficial, but it does come with risks. Recognizing pinch points on the front end is crucial for shared success.

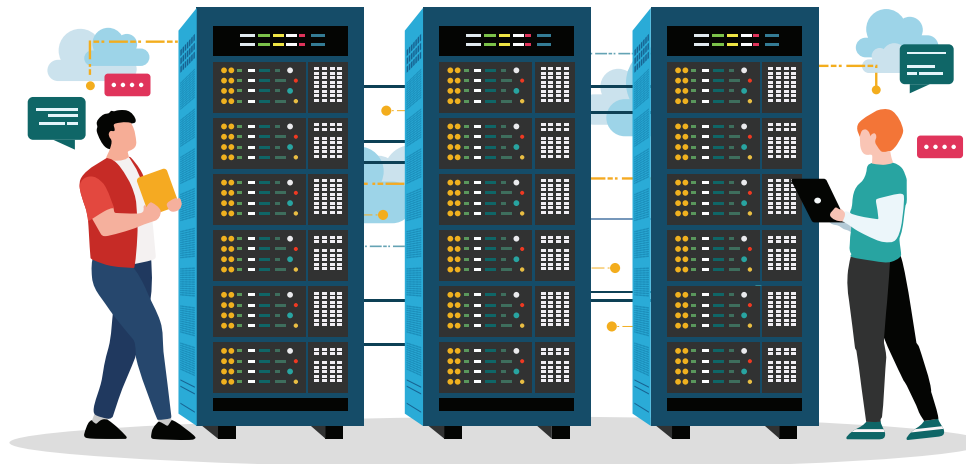
Although more areas can be contemplated, members should begin with the five critical ones detailed below when considering this type of arrangement.

The goal is to introduce process improvements and assign responsibilities among parties to allow for a shared environment to thrive. Members should work with legal counsel to protect themselves with a formal written agreement for services. The agreement should include much of what is highlighted below, along with other necessary provisions.

1. Security

When an organization shares a storage space, physically or digitally, it inherently has shared vulnerability. It is important to limit and protect access so only trusted users are able to gain entry. Keep in mind the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act obligations and how the hosting arrangement will ensure compliance with the law. (See 4. Data Privacy.)

Beyond simply allowing or denying access, other security measures need to be instituted, such as continuous monitoring, access controls and content filtering.



The hosting agreement needs to establish which entity procures and renews any third-party security tools, programs or services; and who is responsible for continued use of such products and services.

2. Performance

It is important for the organization to consider server allocation and amounts of storage needed and allowed. These two points can greatly impact functionality.

It is also wise to know any shared peak times of heavy traffic that can overtax the system and hinder performance. Known fluctuations in traffic can be managed ahead of time through load balancing and caching, as well as other actions and processes.

3. Scalability

When an organization allows another entity to access its storage, the agree-

ment should clearly detail what the other entity's needs are. Having file size requirements and limits identified on the front end should protect the hosting organization from internal battles among mutual parties for space.

When the host's digital footprint grows, so does its needs. The hosting party must understand what that means for upgrades and updates, and the impact to others or required maintenance. Establishing storage limits contains costs and helps avoid performance issues.

4. Data Privacy

Arguably the most important concern on the list is privacy. It is paramount that compliance considerations are clear and segmentation is achieved to limit access and protect against unauthorized access or exfiltration of information.

Other steps may need to be taken if sensitive data is being housed. Beyond sig-

COMING EVENTS

May 9

MCIT BUILDING, ST. PAUL

9 A.M.: Board of Directors meeting

1 P.M.: Claims Committee meeting

June 12

ST. CLOUD, 9 A.M.

Workers' Compensation and the Public

Employer seminar

June 13

MCIT BUILDING, ST. PAUL

9 A.M.: Board of Directors meeting

1 P.M.: Claims Committee meeting

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Hentges Promoted to PC Claims Manager

Longtime MCIT property/casualty claims representative Jeff Hentges was promoted to property/casualty claims manager Feb. 18. The position has been unfilled since former manager Zahir Siddiqui took over as director of claims in mid-2023 and continued to fulfill the manager responsibilities.

Siddiqui says, "Jeff brings a high degree of knowledge and experience to the position, benefiting members with a continuity of service and decision-making."

Hentges has worked on the MCIT program since 2012. He first joined the program as a claims representative for the third-party administrator after many years of handling commercial auto and liability claims. In 2017, he became an MCIT employee when claims handling was brought in house.

In his time with the program, Hentges has handled all types of property and liability claims, including litigated and high-exposure claims.

As the property/casualty claims manager, his primary duties are to oversee the operations and decisions of the property and casualty claims team; assign claims to representatives; provide guidance on claims and application of coverage to claims; and participate in discussion of defense strategies and decisions regarding disposition of complex, high-value and/or controversial claims.

Hentges enjoys working for the MCIT program, because "I appreciate being a resource to our members and providing assistance to them. As claims manager, I would like to see that MCIT continues to provide excellent claims service to our members."



How Do Claims Affect Member's Workers' Compensation Contribution?

A member's claims experience is just part of the factors used to determine the entity's annual cost of contribution for workers' compensation coverage. The calculation is based on:

- The member's payroll for various job classifications. Each job classification has its own contribution rate based on how risky the job is. For example, a sheriff's deputy has a higher-risk job than a veterans services employee.
- The entity's experience modification factor. This is calculated based on the number of and cost of claims experienced over a set period.

Below are two common questions about how claims affect contribution.

Can a member pay less if it does not report all employee workplace injuries and incidents?

Not likely, and such a strategy may end up costing the member more.

MCIT recommends that members report all injuries and incidents for a few key reasons:

1. If an incident ends up having no dollars attached to it, the incident is not a claim and has no impact on the experience modification factor nor on the member's contribution amount.
2. Filing a First Report of Injury or incident report does not admit liability. It only means a claim has been or could be made by an employee. Immediate reporting ultimately helps control the cost of a claim. It is better to report an incident, even if it does not immediately have

a cost, so that it is in the system and can be quickly addressed if it escalates into a situation requiring treatment.

3. If an incident evolves into an actual claim, a late reporting penalty may be imposed per Minnesota law adding to the total cost of the claim.

Can one high-cost claim make a member's contribution increase significantly?

A large or "shock" loss can affect a member's future modification factor, but its severity is limited in the formula in order to prevent disproportionate influence on future contributions. Each claim serves as just one data point in determining a member's overall contribution cost.

A high frequency of lower value claims, in general, has more negative effect on an organization's modification factor than a single high-cost claim.

Learn More about Work Comp Contribution

Members are encouraged to read "Workers' Compensation Experience Modification Factor" available at MCIT.org/resources to learn more about how workers' compensation contribution is calculated, specifically what is included in and how the mod factor is used in that calculation.

MCIT Board of Directors: Ron Antony—Chair, *Yellow Medicine County Commissioner*; Don Wachal—Vice Chair, *Jackson County Commissioner*; Randy Schreifels—Secretary-treasurer, *Stearns County Auditor-treasurer*; Lindsey Meyer, *Wright County auditor-treasurer*; Kurt Mortenson, *Otter Tail County Commissioner*; Todd Patzer, *Lac qui Parle County Commissioner*; Brett Skyles, *Itasca County Administrator*; Jack Swanson, *Roseau County Commissioner*; and Marcia Ward, *Winona County Commissioner*.

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WORKPLACE INJURY HOTLINE

Get Care Recommendations, Start Work Comp Process for Employee Injuries

The workplace injury hotline* connects employees in the moment with a registered nurse to provide recommendations for care of work-related injuries. The service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and helps determine when self-care or professional medical treatment is appropriate.

When an employee is injured on the job, the best outcome is achieved when the individual receives appropriate care as quickly as possible, which can be difficult in a work setting. The workplace injury hotline is a simple and effective solution to this challenge.

Member employees and supervisors can reach the hotline at **1.833.523.0277**. This is a no-cost service provided to members by MCIT.

NEW HOTLINE PARTNER IMPROVES SERVICE

MCIT contracted with TriageNow to administer the workplace injury hotline last August. The process for using the workplace injury hotline did not change, nor did the phone number (**1.833.523.0277**) for accessing it.

Members have experienced improved service quality with Triage Now, such as lower wait times and better follow up with employees.

Benefits of Using the Hotline

Through the workplace injury hotline:

- Injured employees and their supervisors receive immediate access to a registered nurse 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Nurses provide sound clinical advice about when first aid or self-care is appropriate and when medical referrals are recommended.
- The employer's designated contact and MCIT receive a report that begins the workers' compensation claim process. There is no need



to submit a separate claim notice through the MCIT member portal.

Learn More, Promote Service

The Workplace Injury Hotline page at MCIT.org under the Workers' Compensation tab includes more information about this easy-to-use service, including instructions, frequently asked questions and links to a user guide and promotional materials (see more below).

Members can also contact MCIT with their questions about the hotline at **1.866.547.6516**.

Updated Materials Help Promote Service to Staff

Promotional materials (download at MCIT.org) for the workplace injury hotline reflect the partner change to TriageNow. Members are encouraged to use these items to promote and remind staff about the workplace injury hotline.

Items cover how to use the hotline and its benefits for employee injury outcomes and include:

- User guide, which is particularly helpful for supervisors
- Overview video
- Wall poster
- Quick Take script and handout

Members are encouraged to replace old items with the former administrator's name if they have not already done so.

*The service is for employees who are injured at work. It is not for clients or visitors to a member's facility, nor is the hotline to be used for employee injuries that are not work related. Call 911 for life- or limb-threatening situations.

Deadline Approaching for Jail Camera Grants

There is still time for MCIT county sheriffs to submit their applications for the MCIT 2025 jail camera grant ahead of the May 23 deadline.* The program is aimed at encouraging or expanding the use of cameras in county jails.

The goal is to improve the county's ability to benefit operationally from the greater use of camera technology.

How Can the Grant Be Used?

The grant provides financial support for one or more of the following potential uses of mounted or body-worn cameras in jails:

- Adoption of jail camera technology
- Expansion of the use of cameras in jails
- Adoption of innovative practices in the deployment and use of cameras in jails

How Much Will Be Awarded?

Funding for each grant will not exceed \$30,000 with requirements to use the funds within 24 months. MCIT anticipates making a minimum of three awards, with additional awards possible as funds are available.

What Are Grant Winner's Obligations?

The grant winner will provide brief reports to MCIT at intervals of six months, 12 months, 24 months and 36 months after receiving funds. The reports must include details regarding acquisition, adoption, use of and effectiveness of cameras in achieving stated grant application goals.

Learn More at MCIT.org

More information about this program is posted to MCIT.org/news, including application details.

*Previous MCIT jail camera grant awardees are excluded from eligibility.

Sidestep 10 Safety Committee PITFALLS



Every safety committee could fall victim to common pitfalls. Being aware of them and taking appropriate steps to avoid these problems can help ensure that a safety committee remains effective.

PITFALL #1 Committee's Purpose Is Not Clearly Defined

Without a direction or purpose, safety committees rarely are effective or stay active.

Solutions:

- Committee members need to understand their roles and responsibilities and feel like they can make a positive contribution.
- A successful safety committee has a purpose. A mission statement can help identify the goals and direction for the committee.

PITFALL #2 No Set Agenda

With no agenda, the committee may not know what to discuss and become ineffective.

Solutions:

- A prepared, formal agenda makes committee members cognizant of objectives and more likely to stay on task.
- Distributing the agenda well in advance of the meeting gives members time to prepare and participate in discussions.

PITFALL #3 Canceled Meetings

In addition to hampering the activities of the safety committee, frequent meeting cancellations undermine the committee's importance and perceived value to members, management and employees. The safety committee holds an important position

and should strive to stay active.

Solutions:

- Meetings should be scheduled well in advance, preferably at the same time and day of the month.
- Posting planned training, property reviews, safety campaigns and recent loss reviews in a calendar can add value to the committee and make it unfavorable to cancel meetings.
- Committee members should be expected to attend each meeting. An alternate should be found if a committee member cannot attend.

PITFALL #4 Lack of Follow Through

A committee's reputation depends on members taking action.

Solutions:

- Assignments should be reviewed at every meeting, and committee members should provide status reports.
- Expectations should be reasonable, and sufficient time should be given for committee members to complete projects and tasks.

PITFALL #5 Committee Is Unable to Effect Change

A safety committee can only be effective if it is empowered to make changes for the health and safety of employees.

Solutions:

- The entity's board or leadership should respond in a timely manner to the safety committee's recommendations.
- An effective safety committee has top management and board representation at its meetings.

These individuals can better facilitate implementation of recommendations generated from the committee.

- Committee members should always look for new ways to enhance the safety program.

PITFALL #6 Untrained Committee Members

The better trained its members are, the more effective the safety committee can be.

Solutions:

- The committee should allot time during scheduled meetings for training in loss prevention; hazard awareness; regulatory requirements, such as OSHA standards; job safety analysis; and accident investigation. An MCIT loss control consultant can provide resources and help train committee members on a number of safety topics.
- The committee should consider training for the administration of the committee, such as running an effective meeting or problem solving.
- New member training should bring new members up to speed by explaining the committee's functions and duties, and providing new members with copies of past minutes. It is often helpful to have a departing committee member train his or her replacement.

PITFALL #7 Lack of Communication

A safety committee that lacks open communication has difficulty gaining a true sense of safety and wellness within the organization.

Solutions:

- The activities of the committee should be announced. This helps encourage a dialog for safety and facilitates communication from all levels within the organization.
- A safety committee should publicize its actions, minutes and successes. Committee members should be acknowledged when joining and leaving the committee. A committee that is recognized goes a long way in encouraging employee communication about safety and helps foster a culture of safety in the organization.

PITFALL #8 Size of the Committee Is Too Large or Too Small

A committee that is too large may produce more debate than action. A committee that is too small may not be able to carry out the activities required of it.

Solution:

- Ideally, committee membership is representative of all departments or work groups within the entity.

SAFETY COMMITTEE SELF-EVALUATION PINPOINTS AREAS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT

The "Safety Committee Self-evaluation" located in Chapter 4 of the Safety Committee Resource Handbook (available at MCIT.org/resources) is a tool safety committees can use to identify strengths of the committee and areas needing improvement.

IT'S THE LAW

Safety committees are not only a good idea; they are required by law for many employers (Minn. Stat. §182.676).

- The committee should be small enough to function smoothly but large enough to foster communication among members and handle tasks presented.



Veering Off Topic

Discussing issues other than safety is irrelevant and takes time away from completing work in the time allotted for a committee meeting.

Solutions:

- Committees should start meetings on time; end on time; and keep nonsafety-related discussion, griping and negativity to a minimum.
- An agenda can help keep members focused on the tasks at hand.



Members Are Unwilling to Listen to Feedback

It is important for committee members to listen respectfully to others' suggestions and feedback regarding investigations and other safety-related topics. Defensiveness or heated arguments can stifle communication and make others less likely to offer their thoughts.

Solutions:

- Committee members should be trained about and reminded that it is one of the essential goals of the safety committee to offer suggestions and feedback to make the workplace safer for all employees and visitors.
- Suggestions regarding these issues should never be about finding fault or blame. Rather, they should be geared toward improving safety within the organization.
- Anyone who feels defensive about questions and feedback should be encouraged to take a mental step back, take a deep breath and remember the intent of the suggestions and comments.

Learn More

The "Safety Committee Resource Handbook" provides more tips for safety committees. Download it at [MCIT.org/resources](https://www.mcit.org/resources).

SEMINAR

WORKERS' COMPENSATION and the PUBLIC EMPLOYER

"Workers' Compensation and the Public Employer" June 12 in the St. Cloud area covers current concerns and challenges for MCIT members related to workers' compensation. The seminar addresses:

- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and the workers' compensation presumption
- Recent changes to state law and court cases affecting workers' compensation, including Public Employees Retirement Association disability updates
- The importance of and tips for creating and maintaining a return to work program for those who are injured on the job
- Creating, fostering and supporting a trauma-informed workplace: Recognizing psychological and emotional challenges of the job and supporting employees in their management of those challenges

Who Should Attend?

This in-person seminar is intended for those who direct and manage workers' compensation claims, and policies and procedures related to workers' compensation claims. This may be:

- Administrator, coordinator, executive director
- Human resources manager/director
- Sheriff or chief deputy
- SWCD district manager

Expert Presenters

Sessions are presented by experts in the fields of workers' compensation, PERA, PTSD and mental health, including:

- Timothy P. Jung, attorney and shareholder with Lind, Jensen, Sullivan & Peterson P.A., specializing in defense of workers' compensation claims and advising governmental em-

ployers regarding strategies to minimize claims and reduce losses.

- Amy Streng, policy coordinator with Minnesota PERA
- Troy Zenzen, qualified rehabilitation consultant with Zenzen & Ketelsen Consulting
- Christina Eberly, account manager and clinician with AllOne Health (formerly known as Sand Creek)

Event Details

- **Register at [MCIT.org/events](https://www.mcit.org/events):** Complete the online registration form. Payment by credit card is required at the time of registration. If you do not receive a receipt by email, the transaction did not process and you should try again.
- **Fee:** \$75 per person for MCIT member employees.* The fee includes materials, lunch and refreshments.
- **Location:** Park Event Center, Waite Park, Minn. ([TheParkEventCenter.com](https://www.theparkeventcenter.com))
- **Program:** 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. (check-in begins at 8:30 a.m.)

More details about the event and venue are available at [MCIT.org/events](https://www.mcit.org/events).

*Seminar cancellations received by May 28, 2025, will receive a full refund. No refund will be issued for cancellations received after that date.





MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

How to Make Suggested (Informal) Referrals to Employee Assistance Program

Provided by AllOne Health



An Informal referral to the Employee Assistance Program is as simple as it sounds. It is just a conversation with the employee, letting the individual know that the manager/supervisor is concerned about him or her and reminding the employee about how the EAP may be able to help.

Supervisors are best positioned to suggest voluntary use of the Employee Assistance Program because they have:

- **Awareness.** Often the supervisor is the first to know when something of a personal nature is affecting an employee. Supervisors know the employee's leave records, work habits, job conduct, appearance and potentially about the individual's personal situation.
- **Influence.** Supervisors are well-positioned to encourage employees to do something about a problem. A person who may not listen to family and friends frequently makes changes when the workplace intervenes.

Tips for a Successful Informal Referral

1. **Emphasize confidentiality:** The supervisor should make sure that the employee knows that no one at the workplace is informed about the individual's use of the Employee Assistance Program. The supervisor is simply reminding the employee that this resource is available.
2. **Continue to observe and document** signs of improvement or deterioration of the employee's performance whether or not the employee decides to use the EAP.
3. **Follow up with the employee** if the problematic behavior or performance continues. This is a good time to consider whether formal performance or disciplinary steps should be taken.

Voluntary (self-referral) use of the EAP is important to a successful program because it allows the employee to address personal problems and prevent them from becoming bigger issues that affect the workplace.

Through the EAP, MCIT member employees, officials and their dependents are provided with six counseling sessions per identified issue at no cost. Counselors are conveniently available across the state for in person, telephone and video sessions.

Unlimited Supervisor Coaching Available

The Employee Assistance Program provides unlimited telephone consultation for supervisors to help them navigate management challenges.

Coaching conversations aim to find the best ways to respond to employees and handle difficult workplace situations. The supervisor consultation sessions are confidential in accordance with state and federal laws.

Common areas that supervisor coaching address are:

- Employee behavior and job performance concerns
- Strategies to recommend the EAP to employees
- Team dynamics, including interpersonal conflicts
- Critical incident or grief-related concerns in the workplace
- Dealing with change and transition within work teams

Department heads, managers and supervisors can connect with a qualified professional counselor for consultation for management-related issues any time at **1.800.550.6248**. Supervisors can call as often as they need for support.

Learn More

Members can learn more about the EAP and supervisor coaching at MCIT.org under the Services & Programs tab, as well as download brochures, fliers and other EAP promotional materials.

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USE OF EAP SHOULD BE VOLUNTARY

Some members have required employees with unsatisfactory performance to contact the Employee Assistance Program as part of a performance improvement plan. This approach goes against the voluntary intent and scope of service provided under the program. It also falls outside of MCIT's contract with AllOne Health.

To receive optimal benefit from the EAP, there must be a level of trust between the qualified EAP counselor and the employee. Success requires a collaborative effort.

Employees who are required to contact the EAP as part of a performance improvement plan may be resentful and uncooperative with the counselor. As a result, the employee may receive little to no benefit from the EAP and may be reluctant to reach out for assistance in the future.

Instead of making the EAP mandatory, MCIT recommends that the EAP be presented to the employee as an optional resource to help the individual meet performance expectations.



Take Advantage of Safety Council Membership: Boost Driving Safety

MCIT provides members with a Minnesota Safety Council membership at no additional cost, giving them even more ways to support their loss control and risk management efforts.

Encourage Safe Driving on the Job

The Safety Council has a robust menu of driving safety resources for employers at no or low cost. A few of note are part of the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) Minnesota program at DriveSafeMN.org:

- Videos, particularly related to speeding and distracted driving hazards
- Five Minutes for Safety guide a short conversation among teams on a focused driving safety topic
- Newsletter to stay current with employer traffic safety information

- Sample safety policies
- Hands-on tools for distracted driving and impaired driving
- Driving safety awareness campaigns
- Roadside emergency supply kits: general vehicle safety and winter safety

Benefits of Safety Council Membership

The “Members Benefits Overview” video is a quick way to learn more about how an employer can get the most from its Minnesota Safety Council membership. Check it out at [YouTube.com/watch?v=M0ssvpLn0AU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0ssvpLn0AU).

- To access all areas of *MinnesotaSafetyCouncil.org*, members need to set up a log in for the site. Choose “create an account” from the Sign In page and complete the online form.

MCIT MEMBER BENEFIT NO-COST DEFENSIVE DRIVING TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES

MCIT offers on-site defensive driving training to members at no cost as part of MCIT’s loss control services.* Defensive driving involves anticipating situations and making safe, well-informed decisions based on road and environmental conditions.

Defensive driving training for employees helps reduce the number and severity of auto collisions and crashes. The defensive driving training offered to members through MCIT is designed for those employees who drive as part of their job on behalf of the member organization.

Learn More and Schedule Training

Learn more about defensive driving training provided through MCIT at MCIT.org under Services & Programs or members can contact their loss control consultant at **1.866.547.6516**.

*Each on-site defensive driving training session requires a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 30 participants.

Hosting Others’ Data? Evaluate These 5 Critical Areas ... continued from page 1

nificant access controls, encryption (in transit and at rest) may be appropriate.

Establishing and adhering to an effective data lifecycle management plan is also an effective step to reduce vulnerabilities and to reduce the amount of unnecessary data consumption.

Data lifecycle basically refers to how long the data is necessary or required (i.e., records retention schedule or business need) to be maintained. Once it is no longer needed, it should be deleted. If it must be kept indefinitely, it can be

removed from the server and retained in another storage method.

5. Technical Support

The hosting agreement needs to establish which entity is responsible and available to respond to technical issues.

Responsibility and availability go hand-in-hand, as critical functions or service may suffer if technical issues arise, which they unfortunately tend to do.

Having clear directions to the workforce for reporting issues should be established and having technical folks available to match the needs of the services provided are crucial. If one entity is providing time-sensitive services in public safety, it is essential to have technical support at the ready to ensure no critical services go down and stay down for any significant period.