

Announcing Three New Employee-Owners

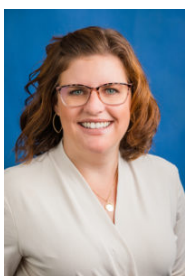
Allen Insurance and Financial is pleased to announce the addition of three new co-owners – all licensed assistants in the company's personal insurance division.

[Kerin Lindahl](#) of Rockport: A graduate of Saint Anselm College, her previous experience is in banking customer service and education. She is based in Camden.

[Sophia Picard](#) of Bar Harbor: A graduate of the University of Maine in Orono, her previous experience is in education. She is based in Southwest Harbor.

[Angela Torell](#) of Tremont: A graduate of Baker College with a degree in business administration, Angela's previous experience includes non-profit administration and custom marine products. She is based in Southwest Harbor.

Anna Moorman and Jo-Ann Neal Recognized for 2023 Sales



Anna
Moorman

[Anna Moorman](#) and [Jo-Ann Neal](#) have been recognized with a bronze level award for Medicare sales in 2023 by Anthem, one of the largest health insurance carriers in Maine.

Moorman and Neal are two of three agents at Allen Insurance and Financial who specialize in the complex market of Medicare insurance, working with a number of insurance carriers to give customers a range of choices to



Jo - Ann
Neal

suit their needs.

This is the ninth consecutive year that Moorman has received an award from Anthem for Medicare sales; she has consistently ranked as one of the Anthem's top sales leaders in Maine. This is Neal's first sales award from Anthem.

The Allen team, comprised of Moorman, Neal and [Lee Cabana](#), has a goal of simplifying the process of enrolling in a Medicare plan, by providing dedicated, one-on-one attention to their customers, assessing each person's needs and finding options that will align with their budget and healthcare goals.

A New Law in Maine: Paid Family and Medical Leave Act



Sherree L.
Craig, CEBS

By [Sherree L. Craig, CEBS](#)

In 2023, the Maine Legislature passed “The Maine Paid Family and Medical Leave Act.” This law will apply to all employers except for the federal government, tribes, and self-employed persons. This insurance program is still in development and, as of this writing, is going through the state’s rulemaking process. What we know now are some of the basics, including:

- Eligible workers will have access to 12 weeks of paid leave per year beginning in May 2026. The benefit will be up to 90% of the employee’s average weekly wage. Higher wage earners will cap at 50% of Maine’s average weekly wage (currently \$1,103.71).
- The employer and employees will pay for the benefits through a shared payroll tax of up to 1% of earnings. The tax will start Jan. 1, 2025.

- Employers with more than 15 employees will pay 1% of wages, but employers can share this cost 50/50 with the employees.
- Employers with less than 15 employees contribute .05% of wages but can deduct the entire amount from the employees' wages.
- Eligible leaves include:
 - o Caring for a family member
 - o Bonding
 - o Medical
 - o Military caregiver
 - o Safe leave (domestic violence, stalking, human trafficking, etc.)

We will follow the progress of the rulemaking process and provide further updates. Many of our partner insurance companies plan to design programs to complement the state's final requirements, as many individuals will lose income protection due to the benefit thresholds set by the program.

Tracking Near Misses and Building a No-Blame Culture of Safety



Dan
Bookham

By Dan Bookham for [WorkBoat Magazine](#)

An accident near miss, also referred to as a close call, or near accident, is an event that happens in a shipyard or on board that has the potential to cause injury or damage, but luckily doesn't. Imagine someone almost getting hit by a swinging crane hook – that would be a near miss. By recognizing and recording these close calls, shipyards and vessel operators can learn from them and prevent future accidents.

The best in the business track accident near misses for a very important reason: Prevention. Near misses are warnings, pure and simple. By tracking these close calls, you can identify weaknesses in safety protocols before an accident happens. These brushes with disaster reveal root causes. Was it a faulty procedure? A communication breakdown? Uneven training? By understanding the why, you can take corrective actions to prevent similar situations from happening again. Talking openly about near misses is also a feature of a proactive safety culture. This can lead to a more vigilant workforce and a safer work environment overall.

Employers in shipyards and on vessels (and any workplace, really) can encourage near miss reporting through a two-pronged approach: Fostering a culture of safety and making the reporting process itself convenient and positive. This takes leadership commitment to prioritizing safety and being visibly involved in safety initiatives, as well as a willingness to address concerns.

Making the most of near misses also requires a no-blame environment. Employees should feel comfortable reporting near misses without fear of punishment or being seen as incompetent.

Emphasize that near misses are valuable information for improvement, not opportunities to assign blame. Recognize and appreciate employees who report near misses. This can be done through public praise, rewards programs (avoiding rewards based on quantity of reports), or simply by expressing gratitude. Encourage open communication about safety by regularly discussing safety procedures, hazards and near misses in safety meetings or training sessions.

Provide an easy-to-use reporting system, whether it's paper forms, a mobile app, or an online portal to allow for ease of reporting and different styles of communication. Make sure it's accessible both during and outside work hours for better recall of events. Offer options for anonymous reporting if employees prefer it. This can help those who are still hesitant to come forward as you build your safety culture. Minimize the amount of information required to report a near miss while still capturing the necessary details. Finally, be sure to communicate the results of near-miss investigations and the corrective actions taken and display gratitude for the heads up. This shows employees that their reports are valued and acted upon, encouraging future participation.

By combining these approaches, employers can create a safe space for employees to report near misses, ultimately leading to a safer work environment for everyone in the shipyard or on board. In essence, tracking near misses is like catching a fire before it engulfs the whole building. It's a proactive approach to safety that can save lives and prevent costly accidents.

DOL Issues Independent Contractor Final Rule

In early January 2024, the U.S. Department of Labor released a final rule, effective March 11, revising the agency's guidance on how to analyze who is an employee or independent contractor under the Fair Labor Standards Act. This new rule restores the multifactor, totality-of-the-circumstances when determining whether a worker is an employee or independent contractor under the FLSA. We have a PDF offering you more details, including a description of the 2021 rule and the new rule issued in 2024.

The final rule analyzes all six economic realities test factors without assigning a predetermined weight to a particular factor. [Click here for the PDF.](#)

[And here is a link to the Maine Workers' Compensation Board web page – with additional resources and an FAQ page.](#)

Randi Morse Joins Allen Insurance and Financial



Randi
Morse

Randi Morse has joined Allen Insurance and Financial as an account manager in the company's benefits division.

Randi is a graduate of Everest University with a degree in accounting. Before joining Allen, with her first insurance job, she worked for a decade in the information technology field in accounting and administrative support.

She received her accident & health producer license in Maine shortly after her arrival at Allen and she is looking forward to supporting the agency's benefits clients with top-notch service for their accounts.

Outside of work, she volunteers with the American Legion, helping those veterans in need because her husband is a military veteran. She also enjoys spending time with family.

Do You Need Health Insurance for Your Trip Abroad?

Whether you're traveling for business or pleasure, a trip abroad takes a lot of research and planning before the fun (or work) begins. In addition to looking up flights, hotels, attractions, eateries, and how to ask, "Where's the restroom?," in a new language, there's another important topic you should explore before you go: health insurance. There is always a risk of experiencing an unexpected illness or an injury on a trip. And,

if you need medical care in another country, you don't want to be on the hook for the full expense if you can avoid it.

You've likely done careful budgeting to figure out how to finance your vacation, so the last thing you want (besides a health-related setback!) is an unexpected medical bill. Travel health insurance can help provide financial protection if you need medical care while abroad. This not only can provide peace of mind, but it can help you avoid potentially devastating financial losses if you become sick or hurt.

What Is Travel Health Insurance?

Travel health insurance can provide coverage for expenses, including hospital stays, emergency medical care, and transportation costs when you're away from home. The specific coverage and benefits of each policy vary depending on the plan and the insurance provider, so it's important to understand what's covered and what isn't before choosing. Of course, you'll want to keep your costs reasonable, but you'll also want to be covered for the most likely scenarios.

Do I Really Need It?

Your first step in figuring out the answer to this question should be to check with your regular health insurance provider to determine whether your policy provides coverage for medical expenses incurred while abroad. If it's covered and you feel the coverage is sufficient, you may not need to look any further. Keep in mind, even if your regular policy offers some coverage, it may be limited or may not cover certain types of medical care, so ask about specifics. And it's important to note that Medicare isn't accepted abroad. Some credit cards offer travel insurance that may cover medical care, so that can be another option to explore. The cost of medical care can be much higher in other countries, especially if you need emergency care, so if your regular policy doesn't cover that, look into additional

coverage.

It's also worth noting that some countries actually require proof of health insurance before they'll allow entry, including Cuba, Antarctica, and the United Arab Emirates.

What Types Are Available?

The kinds of policies you can choose from include:

- Short-term travel health insurance. This provides coverage for a specific trip or period of time, usually up to six months. It can be a good option if you'll be abroad for a short trip.
- Long-term travel health insurance. If you're planning to travel for several months or even a year, a long-term travel health insurance policy may be a better choice for you. These policies typically offer more comprehensive coverage and may be more cost effective over an extended period.
- Medical evacuation insurance. This covers the cost of emergency medical transportation, such as an air ambulance, if you become seriously ill or injured while traveling. Although this might not be necessary for a standard trip out of the country, you'll want to consider it if you're traveling to a remote location or a country with limited medical facilities.

How Should I Choose a Policy?

When making this decision, consider:

- Coverage. Look for a policy that provides comprehensive coverage for medical expenses, emergency care, and medical evacuation. If you have preexisting conditions, your policy should cover those (some don't, in which case having a preexisting condition would exclude you from coverage). Be sure to read the policy carefully so you know what's covered and what isn't.
- Cost. Travel health insurance can vary widely in price, so shop around and compare rates from different providers. The

cheapest policy may not provide the best coverage, so consider the cost-benefit analysis when making your choice.

- Provider network. Check to see if the insurance provider has a network of medical providers in the countries you'll be visiting. An affordable policy that offers comprehensive coverage is of no use to you if it doesn't cover doctors in your destination.
- Policy limitations. Some policies may have limitations on coverage for preexisting conditions, adventure sports such as sky diving, or certain types of medical care.
- Customer service. Look for an insurance provider with good customer service and a 24/7 helpline you can contact if you need assistance while traveling (especially if there is a time difference to consider).

Once you've purchased insurance, be sure to carry your insurance card and/or a copy of your policy with you during your trip. If you do find yourself in need of medical care while abroad, the U.S. Embassy will be able to provide information about local doctors and hospitals. Even if you don't expect to run into medical issues, a sudden illness or accident can cause a huge financial loss. It's best to be prepared.

As always, we're happy to answer any questions you might have about this topic as you figure out your insurance needs. And we wish you happy and healthy travels!

Mental Health: An Area of Focus in Loss Prevention and Workers Comp



Dan Bookham

By [Dan Bookham](#) for [WorkBoat Magazine](#)

We are hearing more and more about mental health in all aspects of daily life these days, and while this new openness about a once taboo subject is to be welcomed it can still cause squeamishness for employers and concerns about intrusion and privacy that a cut or a burn may not. Even so, it is an important enough risk factor for workplace injuries and vessel & yard accidents that it behooves all of us to pay attention to it.

First, the why. Mental health is a workplace safety issue because if issues aren't recognized or challenges aren't addressed, it can lead to a number of negative consequences. Mental health problems can impair an employee's ability to focus, concentrate and make sound decisions. This can lead to terrible outcomes, both for the employee and for others. Mental health problems can result in an increase in injuries and

accidents, decreased productivity, absenteeism and turnover. This can cost employers a significant amount of money. In addition, mental health problems can lead to decreased morale and increased stress levels. This can create a negative work environment, which is not conducive to safety. All of these are drivers of stress on people and systems, and in turn these increase a company's risk exposure.

There are several things employers can do to address mental health in the workplace. By taking the following steps, employers can help to create a safe and healthy workplace for all employees.

- Provide proactive mental health awareness training to employees. This training can help employees understand mental health issues and how to identify and support someone who may be struggling. Your workers comp/P&I insurer will likely have resources they can refer you to, as will occupational health clinics and local health care providers.
- Create a culture of open communication about mental health. This means encouraging employees to talk about their mental health and to seek help if they need it. The military are real leaders in this area and offer proven, concrete examples of functioning programs for populations where talking about feelings and mental health may not be a default setting.
- Offer mental health resources to employees. This could include providing access to mental health professionals, offering on-site counseling or providing financial assistance for mental health treatment.
- Promote healthy work-life balance. This means encouraging employees to take breaks, to get enough sleep and to have a life outside of work. Remind your people that toughness is not always analogous to pushing yourself to a breaking

point.

- Address workplace stressors. This could include identifying and reducing sources of stress, such as unrealistic deadlines, heavy workloads or bullying.

By taking these steps, employers can reduce the risk of mental health issues driving injuries and accidents, improve quality of life for their people, reduce insurance claims and help to create a safe and healthy workplace for all employees.

Patriot Insurance Company Awards Allen Insurance & Financial Diamond Achiever in Maine

Allen Insurance and Financial has been named Maine's 2022 Diamond Achiever by [Patriot Insurance](#) Company. The annual Diamond Achiever awards are presented to the highest-performing agencies, based on set criteria, including length of appointment, profitability, growth, and policy retention.

"Year after year it is a thrill to announce our Diamond Achiever awards. The 2022 Maine Diamond Achiever, Allen Insurance and Financial, has worked hard and shown relentless efforts and commitment to our mutual customers," shared Patriot Insurance Company President and CEO Lincoln Merrill, Jr. "Congratulations on a great year!"

The results achieved by the team at Allen Insurance and

Financial in 2022 helped the agency become one of the most successful among Patriot Insurance Company's more than 115 independent agencies.

"All of us at Allen are proud of our 30-year partnership with Patriot Insurance Company. They consistently deliver on their promise of protection to our customers, while providing peace of mind. This recognition from Patriot Insurance Company speaks to the skills and hard work of the Allen team as we help our mutual customers navigate life's risks and rewards," said Allen Insurance and Financial Senior Vice President Dan Bookham.

Allen Insurance and Financial has been working with Patriot Insurance Company since 1993 and is recognized as one of the carrier's Preferred Plus independent insurance agency partners.

About Patriot Insurance

Patriot Insurance Company has been providing peace of mind for families and businesses in New England for over 50 years. Headquartered in Yarmouth, Maine, we are a regional carrier offering business, home, auto, life, and surety products backed by local, autonomous claims, loss control, and underwriting teams. We work exclusively with independent agents who can give our customers the personal guidance and service they deserve. Since 2007, we have partnered with Frankenmuth Insurance, a longstanding company founded in Michigan in 1868. Patriot Insurance Company is financially sound, with an AM Best rating of "A" (Excellent). To learn more, visit us online at patriotinsuranceco.com.

Live Well, Work Well – June 2023 – Exercising Outdoors, Benefits of Gardening and More

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