

Loss Control Visits: Taking a Proactive and Collaborative Approach



By [Dan Bookham](#) for December 2022 [WorkBoat](#) Magazine

Hang around vessels, shipyards, terminals and insurance long enough and you are bound to become familiar with the seemingly strange ritual of the loss control visit. The frequency of the visits depends on the individual insurance company but invariably at some point risk engineers will show up to visit clad in high viz and hard hat, usually clutching a camera (and sometimes a clipboard) to inspect your boat or facility for potential hazards and issues. Sometimes they bring donuts. They also always issue a report and list “recommendations” (read requirements, lest you lose your insurance), which, unlike the Krispy Kremes, can often feel hard to digest.

It doesn't have to be that way, however. By taking a proactive approach to risk management and drawing on the resources of your insurance company (resources your premium payments fund), those loss control visits can feel less like a visit by a drill

instructor looking for an unmade bed and more like a collaboration with safety specialists who can both save you money and ensure your people head home each day or after each trip with the same number of digits and limbs they had when they came in.

In preparing for a loss control visit, I highly recommend working with your insurance agent to undertake a preliminary walk-through to see if you both can spot any easy fixes or potential trouble spots (a frayed cord on a tool for example, or sloppy housekeeping in a workshop). Having your own punch list of planned corrections and improvements will minimize any surprises and make it easier to budget for the fixes. When the loss control team visits, rather than just relying on the written report, be sure to ask them to flag issues in a post walk-through meeting so you can discuss them while memories are fresh.

When the report comes in, be prepared to respond with a timeline to address the elements they raise. I've often found that draconian demands to make immediate fixes soften if you demonstrate a willingness to work on trouble spots at a reasonable (and often more affordable) pace. Proactively use the tools insurers provide, both online and in person, to make the most of your premium dollars and improve the safety and risk profile of your business.

Not only does a proactive and collaborative approach to loss control make the workday safer for your people, your customers and their property, your passengers, and your own stuff, it also can result in lower lifetime insurance costs as fewer claims and a proactive approach to safety and risk make you an attractive customer for insurers to woo.

Home Heating Safety – Fall 2022

Electric Space Heaters

- Only use space heaters that have UL or FM tested and approved listed on their labels.
- Position at least 3-feet away from anything combustible such as curtains, furniture, bedding, paper, and decorations during the holiday season. Never place clothing, hats, or mittens on space heaters to dry.
- Always turn off space heaters when leaving the room or going to sleep.
- Ensure your space heater has an automatic safety shut-off switch that turns it off in the event the heater tips over.
- Avoid using extension cords or power strips with your space heater, and do not plug multiple space heaters into the same outlet. Always unplug your space heater when not in use.



Wood/Pellet Stoves & Fireplaces

- Should be serviced annually by a qualified technician. Chimneys, flues, and exhaust pipes should be cleaned annually by a certified professional.
- Ensure wood stoves are on their own separate flue from any other furnace or heat source.
- Allow ashes to cool completely and use a non-combustible metal container to dispose of ashes.
- Do not vacuum ashes with a household vacuum.
- Only burn dried and seasoned wood in your fireplace/wood stove. Refer to the manufacturer's instructions and only burn the recommended pellets in your pellet stove.
- During the holiday season, use caution and position all decorations at least 3-feet away from your stove/fireplace.



As consumers, we're all experiencing the impacts of the current economic inflation, rising energy costs included. Over the past year, average heating oil prices have increased 50%; natural gas by 18%; and propane by 42%; to some of the highest prices in decades.

Heading into the winter heating season, higher heating costs can put a strain on household budgets and make alternative heating sources an attractive solution.

Keep your home warm and your family safe this winter by reviewing these secondary heat source safety recommendations and taking preventative steps to avoid an accident. [View this PDF](#) from our colleagues at [MMG Insurance.](#)

Making Lemonade From Lemons: Long-Term Capital Loss Stock Creates Another Type of Tax- Efficient Charitable Gifting Opportunity



Sarah Ruef-
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By [Sarah Ruef-Lindquist](#)
For [Pen Bay Pilot](#)

For those of us working in the area of wealth management, 2022 will long be remembered as the year the stock market rolled gains back – way back – to pre pandemic levels. 2021 ended on a high note...the indices at or near all-time highs, after a climb from a downtick in early 2020 as the pandemic set in and the economy shut down. As 2021 came to a close, charitable gifts of long-term capital gain stock were the norm, and plentiful.

Then the markets began a slide as January slipped into February and valuations, including bond values as interest rates were

raised by the Fed, walloping investors who have long relied upon a balanced portfolio to weather the storms of market volatility. As 2022 comes to a close, investors are seeing some signs of market value recovery, but it's feeling a like it could be a very slow, volatile, long climb ahead.

Donors may feel that what would have been a great, tax-efficient opportunity to use long-term appreciated stock has gone by...and it may have, for a while. But let's not forget the other side of that charitable gifting sword: using long-term capital losses to fund charitable gifts.

How could that work? A sale of stock that has been held more than 1 year that has declined in value below its basis or purchase price can generate a loss, and the proceeds of the sale can be used for a charitable gift.

Let's say you purchased or inherited stock with a basis of \$5,000 and held it for more than a year. The current value is \$1,000. If you sell it, your loss is \$4,000, which can be used to offset gains now or in future years as a carry-forward. What gains? Many mutual funds declare gains, even in years when the stock market has had an overall decline, so many investors will actually have realized gains within their portfolios, even if they haven't sold anything. Losses can be used to offset gains.

You can use the \$1,000 proceeds to make a gift of stock to charity and if you itemize, you can take an itemized deduction for that \$1,000. That's a lot of tax savings, now and in future years.

Consult with your tax or financial advisor to learn more about this opportunity and how it could apply to your situation before Dec. 31, 2022.

When it Comes to Claim Reporting, Don't Hesitate



Chris
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By Chris Richmond
For November 2022 [WorkBoat Magazine](#).

You have heard it before but it bears repeating: If something occurs that you think might be a claim let your agent know sooner rather than later. If a passenger or crew member is injured, report it, even if they say they are fine and do not need medical attention at the time.

The time to record information pertaining to any sort of occurrence is immediately after it happens. This is when everything is still fresh in your mind and you can accurately record the events that happened. Who was injured? Where did it happen? What were they doing at the time? It is much easier to

obtain this information at the time of the time of the event rather than try to track it down six months later when you receive a letter from an attorney. By letting your agent know what happened, they in turn can report the claim to the insurance company. There is no harm in sending something in for reporting purposes only. Adjusters would much rather have this information sooner than later – even if the eventual medical bill is less than your deductible.

We had a passenger vessel operator contact us recently to report a claim. A passenger had fallen while disembarking from a tender while on a shore trip. The captain had offered medical assistance off the boat at a local clinic but the passenger had refused, stating that they were fine and wanted to continue on with the trip. The cruise continued and the passenger enjoyed the remainder of the trip with no complaint. Fourteen months later, the owner of the vessel receives a notice from an attorney looking for payment of medical bills as well as for pain and suffering.

Another client had a similar situation but with a crew member. The individual injured her back while on board. The insured reported the occurrence and the crew member received medical treatment for her injury. Eighteen months later the insured was issued a notice of summons from the crew member's attorney looking for pain and suffering. The adjustor was able to reopen the claim and review the file with all the pertinent notes from the time of the claim.

You should never feel that you can't report something to your insurance agent. Unsafe areas of operations can be determined on board and corrected. This can help reduce injuries and ultimately save you money in the long run. By including your agent in the conversation you can help keep your passengers safer and your business more profitable.

Benefits Buzz Newsletter – November 2022



This month's Benefits Buzz discusses a new IRS rule that changes the premium tax credit's affordability rules for family members and new IRS guidance that increases the health FSA limit for 2023 plan years.

[Information is on this PDF.](#)

Increased Contribution Limits to Retirement Plans for 2023



By [Sarah Ruef-Lindquist](#)
For [Pen Bay Pilot](#)

In late October, the IRS announced new limits increasing the amount that taxpayers may contribute to their retirement plans each year beginning in 2023: the amount individuals will be able to contribute to their 401(k), 403(b), most 457 plans, and the federal government's Thrift Savings Plan in 2023 increased to \$22,500, up from \$20,500 for 2022.

The catch-up contribution limit for employees aged 50 and over who participate in 401(k), 403(b), most 457 plans, and the federal government's Thrift Savings Plan is increased to \$7,500, up from \$6,500. Therefore, participants in 401(k), 403(b), most 457 plans, and the federal government's Thrift Savings Plan who are 50 and older can contribute up to \$30,000, starting in 2023.

The amount individuals can contribute to their SIMPLE retirement accounts is increased to \$15,500 from \$14,000. The catch-up contribution limit for employees aged 50 and over who participate in SIMPLE plans is increased to \$3,500, up from \$3,000. This translates into a contribution limit for those aged 50 and older of \$19,000.

Similarly, the \$6,000 contribution limit for IRAs is increasing to \$6,500. The catch-up amount remains the same at \$1,000.

These increased amounts expand the ability of workers to put into their tax-deferred qualified plans and IRAs amounts that are able to grow and earn income tax-free, until withdrawn, when income tax is usually due, unless the account is a ROTH, in which case it is not taxed upon withdrawal.

The income ranges for determining eligibility to make deductible contributions to traditional Individual Retirement Arrangements (IRAs), Roth IRAs, and to claim the Saver's Credit all increased for 2023. FMI, visit <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/401k-limit-increases-to-22500-for-2023-ira-limit-rises-to-6500> and consult with your financial and tax advisors to the impact of all of these provisions and changes on your unique financial plans.

Leann Cailler Earns Safeco Insurance® Award of Distinction



Leann Cailler,
ACSR, CPIA

Leann Cailler, a personal insurance account executive with Allen Insurance and Financial, has earned the Safeco Insurance Award of Distinction and has been named a producer of the year for 2022.

This recognition is achieved only by a select group of agents across the country who sell Safeco Insurance.

The Safeco Award of Distinction honors outstanding agents who have developed a solid partnership with Safeco. Only 150 agents nationwide earn this award.

Cailler, of Waldoboro, has been with Allen Insurance and Financial since 2007. She holds both the Accredited Customer Service representative (ACSR) and Certified Professional Insurance Agent (CPIA) designations. This is her second year receiving the Safeco Award of Distinction.

Allen Insurance and Financial is a multi-year President's Award and Premier Partner agency, recognition given only to the best independent insurance agencies that sell Safeco. Safeco is a Liberty Mutual Insurance company.

Greg Karlik Joins Our Benefits Team



Greg Karlik has joined the benefits division at Allen Insurance and Financial to work with individual and group health insurance clients.

Following a three decades-long career in the television broadcasting industry, Karlik has spent the past three years as a licensed insurance professional in the individual health insurance market place, helping customers manage and better understand, what, for many, is a stressful decision-making process.

He is a graduate of the University of Vermont and the University of San Francisco, where he earned a Master of Business Administration.

Karlik and his family live in Northport. Outside of work, he enjoys spending time with his wife, their children and two dogs as well as gardening and exploring the Maine outdoors.

Your Guide to Year-End Financial Planning for 2022

As 2022 comes to a close, you'll want to reassess your financial goals, examine any life changes that will affect your saving or spending, and learn about recent developments in the world of

taxes and finance that might benefit you. So, before you head to your annual meeting with your financial advisor, read over these questions and use them as a helpful guide for your conversation.

1. Can I Contribute More to Retirement Funds?

While the state of the economy might make you hesitant about setting additional income aside, consider whether you're financially able to maximize (or increase) contributions to your workplace retirement plan. At the very least, find out if you're contributing the minimum to take full advantage of any employer match benefit. Increasing your contributions to a traditional IRA is another option, though you should be mindful that those with higher incomes may not qualify for a tax deduction.

2. Do I Have FSA Dollars to Spend or Carry Over?

Use what you can from your flexible spending account (FSA), and check your employer's plan to see how much of any unused funds you can carry over to the next plan year. Although the rollover option applies to your employer's plan year rather than the calendar year, this year-end assessment is a good reminder to make sure you're on track. If permitted, the maximum FSA carryover amount is \$570. If you have a dependent care FSA, you can save as much as \$5,000 (family limit) or 2,500 (married filing separately) in 2022.

Now is also a great time to discuss with your advisor maximum health savings account (HSA) contributions if you have a high-deductible health plan (HDHP). This can be a fairly complex topic in general, so it's a great idea to tap into your advisor's knowledge to learn more.

3. Should I Consider Roth Conversions?

If you have some room in your current tax bracket before

reaching a higher federal income tax rate, you may want to consider doing a Roth Conversion. This would involve converting some of your pre-tax retirement savings, like in a traditional IRA, into a post-tax account, like a Roth IRA, so you'd never have to pay taxes on future earnings. Taxes would be paid up front on the conversion amount, and you'd enjoy tax-free growth in the future. If this interests you, discuss this strategy with your advisor, who can help determine if it's an ideal time to do a conversion. He or she can also run projections to see if you would end up paying less in taxes overtime with this strategy.

4. What Is Tax-Loss Harvesting?

If some investments in your portfolio have suffered a loss, the end of the year is a common time to consider if it would make sense to "harvest losses" by selling them. Doing so can offset gains you have realized in your portfolio, as well as up to \$3,000 of your earned income. Tax-loss harvesting can get complex, so this is a great topic about which to seek professional help. Be aware: Investments can only be rebought after a certain period, as selling a security for a loss and buying back within 30 days does not qualify.

5. Do My Charitable Donations Qualify for a Tax Deduction?

Charitable contributions donated directly to a qualified charity or to a donor-advised fund can help you get a federal tax deduction. Keep in mind, however, that this will often only be beneficial if you're itemizing. It's worthwhile to discuss with your tax professional if your charitable contributions, in addition to other deductions, will surpass your standard deduction.

6. What Should My Strategy for Stock Options Be?

If you have vested stock options included in your compensation

package from your employer, now may be a good time to consider whether it would be more beneficial to sell them in January of 2023 as opposed to this year. Review your stock option statement and plan document with your tax professional and discuss which year may provide you the best opportunity from an income tax perspective.

7. Do I Need to Think About RMDs?

Some retirement accounts are subject to required minimum distributions (RMDs). This means once you are nearing approximately age 72, you may be required to start taking distributions from your retirement accounts, owing taxes on the way out. It's not uncommon for people to forget to take RMDs. What's more, recent legislation has made them a bit more complex, so RMDs for retirees and their beneficiaries are best planned with your advisor to be sure you're following the rules.

8. When Do I Need to Resume Repaying Student Loans, and Do I Qualify for Student Debt Relief?

Student loan payments are set to restart at the commencement of 2023. Under the Biden administration's one-time student loan debt relief plan, payments could be reduced to 5 percent of discretionary income for most undergraduate loans. More information on this plan will be announced in the coming days and weeks. To get the latest, consult this helpful [fact sheet](#) and sign up for updates on the [U.S. Department of Education website](#).

9. Should I Update My Estate Plans?

It's always a good idea to review estate plans as part of year-end financial planning. As life events happen, such as marriage or the birth of a child, your estate plan should be updated accordingly with your attorney. At the end of each year, discuss

with your family how the life events you've experience over the last year might affect your estate planning. When you meet with your advisor, be sure to update and review beneficiary designations, trustee appointments, power of attorney provisions, and health care directives.

Take Advantage of Your Advisor's Knowledge

Although this year-end financial planning checklist covers a lot of ground, it's intended to serve just as a springboard for your planning conversations with your financial advisor. You'll have a great starting point to talk through issues and deadlines that are most relevant to you, and you should be sure to add anything else you want to know to this list so you don't forget to inquire. An annual planning meeting is a great time to ask any questions you need answered regarding your financial plans for the coming year.

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Welcoming Susan Howland as Director of Human Resources



Susan Howland of Camden has joined Allen Insurance and Financial as director of human resources.

“Susan’s diverse business background and extensive leadership experience make her a tremendous asset for our company,” said Michael Pierce, company president. “We are looking forward to the contributions she will bring to our team and our employee ownership culture.”

A native of Manchester, Maine, Howland has both a bachelor’s degree (international affairs and economics) and a master’s degree (economics) from the University of Maine.

She has held senior executive leadership positions at credit card company MBNA; at Wayfarer Marine in Camden; at the Penobscot Bay YMCA and at Maine Sport in Rockport.

“Now more than ever, I love working with people, to help them advance their career and realize their full potential. Creating a positive environment where people are empowered to provide outstanding customer service is exciting work. To have the opportunity to work here at Allen with this fantastic team of employee-owners is truly remarkable. I am absolutely thrilled,” Susan said.

Howland lives in Camden with her husband, their two children and two dogs. Outside of work, she enjoys attending her children's sporting events. She is a runner and an avid basketball fan.