



Volume 20, Issue 12
December 2024

2024 Atlas in Wonderland!

Atlas Insurance Agency celebrated the season in style at our annual Christmas party held at the Prince Waikiki, coordinated by the Office Activities Committee! (OAC) This year's theme, Atlas in Wonderland, added a magical touch to the festivities.

One of the highlights? Our hilarious Christmas Tree Wrapping Contest, where participants became "Christmas Trees," wrapped up in festive paper and topped it off with a little dance! The party wouldn't have been complete without an engaging magic show by the world-renowned Shoot Ogawa and, of course, delicious food and great company. Here's to celebrating the magic of the season together!

Inside this issue

2024 Atlas in Wonderland!	1-3
Atlas Rise & Grind Treat!	4-5
Santa's Workshop!	6
Holiday Cheer!	7
2024 Agency of the Year/PL Referrals	8
Welcome!	9
Toastmasters	10
Risky Business	11-13
Client First Program & Atlas Gives Back!	14



CORE VALUES

**Pono
Lokahi
Alaka'i
Ho'okele
Kakou
Imi'ike**

Email Article Submissions to:
kribilla@atlasinsurance.com

2024 Atlas in Wonderland!, Cont.



2024 Atlas in Wonderland!, Cont.

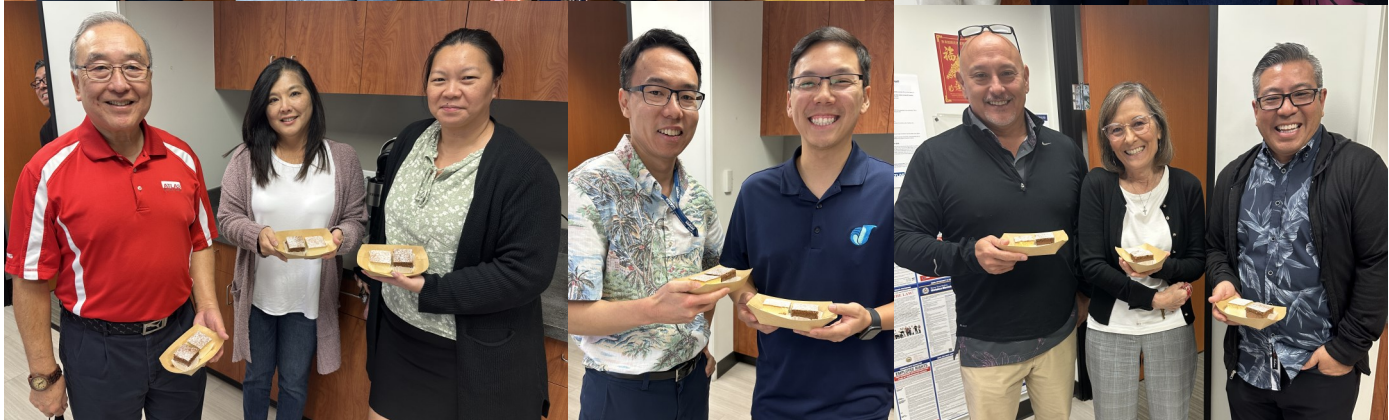


Atlas Rise & Grind Treat—Sachi Sweets!

We're always excited to support local businesses! This month's Rise & Grind Café event featured the delectable Japanese cheesecakes from Sachi Sweets. With their signature fluffy texture and rich flavors, these cheesecakes came in both chocolate and classic varieties! Sachi Sweets brought us joy to our day and satisfying our sweet cravings! Supporting local never tasted so good.



Atlas Rise & Grind Treat—Sachi Sweets!, Cont.



Santa's Workshop!

Spreading holiday cheer! Our Atlas Insurance team volunteered at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women & Children's Santa's Workshop, wrapping and prepping gifts for children in need. We were honored to be part of this heartwarming event, making the season brighter for keiki in our community. Mahalo to all who joined in this meaningful effort!



Holiday Cheer!

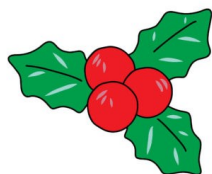
Santa (our president, Chason), and his elves (our senior leadership team), visited the office to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and thank our hardworking employees and agents giving their heartfelt appreciation for their dedication and teamwork throughout the year. Wishing everyone a holiday season filled with joy, kindness, and cheer!



Our team also got into the holiday spirit by donning their best (or worst!) ugly Christmas sweaters for National Ugly Sweater Day. With a variety of fun and festive designs, our employees brought plenty of laughs and holiday fun!



Last but not least, our BSG team from the Islander Group in the Philippines enjoyed their year-end Holiday party as well. The "Jam of the Year!"



2024 Agency of the Year Winner!

Great News! PropertyCasualty360 has recently named Atlas Insurance Agency one of its 2024 Agency of the Year winners! The recognition celebrates independent agencies nationwide excelling in client satisfaction, innovative practices, and industry leadership in the P&C insurance sector. A panel of industry experts selected the 2024 winners based on how well they achieved goals and how impactful their work has

been; how dedicated the nominee has been to furthering modernization and humanization in the P&C insurance business; and how committed and dedicated the nominee has been to high ethical standards, service, and excellence. Thank you for your hard work and dedication in helping us be an industry leader not only in Hawaii but nationwide!



PL Referrals!

Please continue to refer your friends and family (all islands) for a personalized **Insurance Analysis** for our Personal Lines Referral Program! Staff receives **\$25** per referral and then **\$25** for every referral bound.

If you would like to participate in this program, please contact Irene Zilisch, at (808) 533-8704 or izilisch@atlasinsurance.com.

Here are the staff that helped with the program for the month of December 2024!



Elaine Gascon, 1 referral, 1 bound; Grant Murakami, 1 referral; Jessica Pippin, 1 referral; Pamela Varma, 2 referrals; Terri Workman, 1 referral, 1 bound.

Welcome, Craig!

Let's welcome Craig Okutani as our new Senior Risk Consultant! Most recently, Craig was a Safety Management Professional at Lawson & Associates, where he facilitated safety solutions with their occupational health and safety management systems and helped prevent and evaluate potential safety issues. Before that, he was a Safety Manager at Partners in Development Foundation, conducting investigations to ensure compliance with federal and state safety regulations. He was a Risk Control Consultant at ProService Hawaii before that. Craig also has a background in sales and holds a B.A. in Sociology with a minor in Business Administration from the University of Hawaii - West Oahu. Welcome, Craig!



Welcome, Sheri!

We are excited to welcome Sheri Nii to the Atlas Ohana! Sheri is working part-time as Tricia Miyashiro's administrative Assistant. Most recently, Sheri was the Front Office Assistant at Helping Hands Hawaii where she assisted with customer service, facility management, scheduling, and vendor relations. Sheri is also an active volunteer with the Scouts of America.

Welcome, Sheri!

A Toastmasters Meeting Like No Other

This month, we decided to shake things up and embrace the festive spirit in a way inspired by other Toastmasters groups across the country. Instead of holding our traditional meeting format, we opted for something a little different—a fun and creative exercise in improvisation, coupled with a holiday potluck to celebrate the end of the year together.

For this special meeting, we played a lively and imaginative game that tested our quick-thinking and public speaking skills. The setup was a courtroom scenario, where participants had to choose between being the defendant or the plaintiff. Each person was assigned a delightfully bizarre scenario, such as being accused of stealing Christmas cookies from houses to vandalizing Honolulu Hale.

The challenge? Each participant had to give an impromptu speech either defending their actions or arguing why they should be found guilty. Once the speeches were complete, the entire group acted as the jury, casting votes on whether the accused was guilty or not guilty. While the game was undeniably silly and full of laughs, it served a serious purpose: honing our ability to think on our feet, a skill that's vital in public speaking and professional settings. This playful activity mirrored the objectives of the Table Topics portion of a typical Toastmasters meeting, where members practice delivering impromptu speeches.

This special meeting was a reminder that Toastmasters isn't just about speeches and structured sessions—it's also about community, creativity, and having fun while building invaluable skills. Whether it's practicing structured presentations or thinking on the fly in whacky scenarios, there's always something to learn and enjoy at our meetings. Here's to more growth, laughter, and camaraderie as we continue our Toastmasters journey in the new year!



Risky Business Corner

Over-Reserving in Workers' Compensation Claims and Its Impact on EMR By: Adrene Thompson



Introduction: Over-reserving in workers' compensation (WC) claims refers to the practice of setting aside excessive amounts of money to cover potential future claim costs. This occurs when an insurer assigns higher-than-necessary reserves to individual claims, estimating that future medical, legal, or indemnity costs will be higher than anticipated. While proper reserving is critical for financial stability and claim management, over-reserving can lead to unintended consequences, particularly regarding the Experience Modification Rate (EMR).

How Over-Reserving Affects EMR Calculation:

1. **Inflated Claim Costs:** Over-reserving can artificially inflate the projected cost of a claim. When reserves are set too high, it appears that a company has incurred greater losses than it actually has. These inflated costs are recorded as part of the company's claims history, which directly affects the EMR calculation. Even if the
2. **actual expenses for the claim turn out to be lower than initially expected, the higher reserves will continue to reflect on the company's claims experience, potentially leading to a higher EMR and, therefore, higher workers' compensation premiums.**
3. **Long-Term Impact on EMR:** A company's EMR is determined by claims that are reported in the prior 3-5 years. Over-reserving during this period will continue to have a long-term effect on the company's premiums. As the inflated reserves are included in the calculation of the EMR, the company might end up paying premiums based on higher projected claims costs, even after the reserves are adjusted or reduced.
4. **Disruption of Trend Analysis:** Workers' compensation insurers rely on trend analysis to evaluate the ongoing risk of a business. Over-reserving can distort these trends, making it appear that a company is facing a higher risk than it actually is. If reserves are not adjusted in line with actual claim costs over time, the resulting EMR could be misleading, leading to unnecessary premium hikes or a failure to reduce premiums when the risk decreases.

Risky Business Corner



Over-Reserving in Workers' Compensation Claims and Its Impact on EMR, Cont.

Why Does Over-Reserving Happen?

There are several reasons why over-reserving might occur in workers' compensation claims:

- **Cautionary Approach:** Insurers and employers may overestimate future liabilities to ensure that they have enough funds to cover any unexpected increases in claim costs, especially when dealing with long-tail claims (claims that take years to resolve).
- **Poor Claim Evaluation:** Insufficient information or overly conservative estimations about the severity or complexity of a claim can lead to excessive reserves being set.
- **Industry or Regulatory Pressure:** Some industries may require higher reserves due to higher risk profiles, while regulatory or accounting standards might push insurers to maintain higher-than-necessary reserves to meet solvency requirements.
- **Inexperience or Lack of Expertise:** In some cases, over-reserving results from a lack of expertise in claims management or a failure to accurately assess the potential outcome of a claim.

The Consequences of Over-Reserving:

1. **Higher Premiums:** As mentioned earlier, over-reserving can lead to an artificially inflated EMR. This results in higher premiums for the business, even though its actual claims experience may not warrant such increases. High premiums can strain a company's finances and hinder its competitiveness in the marketplace.



2. **Misleading Financial Reporting:** Over-reserving can also distort a company's financial statements, giving the impression of greater financial liabilities and a higher-risk profile than is accurate. This can affect Investors' perceptions, financial analysis, and decision-making.

Risky Business Corner



Over-Reserving in Workers' Compensation Claims and Its Impact on EMR, Cont.

3. **Hindered Risk Management Efforts:** When a company's EMR is artificially high due to over-reserving, it may overlook effective risk management strategies, assuming that its claims experience is worse than it is. On the other hand, it could also cause the company to be overly cautious, investing more in safety measures and loss prevention programs than necessary.
4. **Impact on Retrospective Rating Plans:** Many businesses participate in retrospective rating plans where premiums are adjusted based on a company's actual claims experience over time. Over-reserving can make it look like a company has had more claims or more severe claims than it has, leading to higher premiums under such plans.

Conclusion:

Over-reserving in workers' compensation claims is a practice that, while well-intentioned, can have significant financial implications for businesses. Its impact on the Experience Modification Rate (EMR) can result in inflated premiums, misleading financial reporting, and misaligned risk management strategies. By carefully monitoring and adjusting reserves, working with experienced professionals, and leveraging advanced technologies, companies can avoid the negative effects of over-reserving and ensure that their EMR reflects their actual claims experience.



Client First Program

Customer Satisfaction



Atlas recently began working with Market Trends Pacific to survey clients on our performance. We started to gather positive comments and would like to begin sharing it with the company. Here is what our clients are saying about us!

“We have a long partnership. They [EB] provide excellent service and the resources we need.” Staff: Kevin Hakoda. *PACT*

“They’re [EB] on top of it and I appreciate their reminders and just their involvement in communication.” Staff: Kristen Chong. *INPEACE*

“It’s because of the people that I work with, {EB} they give me the information very quickly and accurately. They are very helpful.” Staff: Tobi Naito. *Gecko Enterprises Inc.*

“They’re [EB] very accommodating , very helpful, easy to work with and always there for you.” Staff: Kevin Hakoda. *Haseko*

“They’re very responsive and our representatives are very knowledgeable.” Staff: Tobi Naito. *Sterling Health Services, Inc.*

“Very responsive to needs and questions, offers options to help reduce costs. Always available with answers to concerns.” Contact: Kristen Chong. *MEO, Inc.*

Atlas Gives Back!

The Atlas Insurance Agency Foundation continuously gives back throughout the year with corporate sponsorships or straight donations to organizations/non-profits. Please don’t forget that Tradewind Group will match your personal donation to a 501C3 \$1.00 for \$1.00, up to \$500 per employee. Contact Dana Tokioka at dtokioka@atlasinsurance.com for more details.



F O U N D A T I O N

\$10,000

