

WORKPARTNERS Spotlight



INTERVIEW WITH ...

Ken Hernandez

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Every month WorkPartners turns the spotlight on individuals making an impact and exemplifying excellence in the field of workers' compensation.

This month we sit down with Ken Hernandez, former Director of Risk Management for San Bernardino County.

Hello Ken. You have over twenty-seven years of experience in various aspects of Risk Management and Human Resources for both public and private sectors. You recently served as the Director of Risk Management for the largest county in the world and one of the nation's most populous (San Bernardino County). So, what led you to change career paths and join the Law Offices of Stacey Tokunaga?

I am a firm believer that you must understand all aspects of your trade in order to accurately manage it. After over 27 years of experience in risk management, I have been managing litigation plans but I had never worked in a firm. I received the

opportunity to experience the legal side of workers' compensation when I was approached by Stacey Tokunaga to manage her firm. What better opportunity to learn the legal side of workers compensation than experiencing it firsthand. This opportunity has helped my understanding of the legal side of workers' compensation and has proven to be invaluable to my Risk Management career.

It's a sad fact of life in the 21st century that active shootings have become a regular occurrence in the United States. As the Director of

When a CATASTROPHE Hits!!
ACTIVE shooter
12:30 pm session

WORKPARTNERS
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May 16, 2019 | San Diego
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Former Director of
Risk Management
for San Bernardino
County



Ken Hernandez
Presenter

Risk Management during the horrendous shooting that took place in San Bernardino on December 2, 2015, can you give us one lesson learned from this unthinkable occurrence?

The shooting that took place on December 2, 2015 will be embedded in my mind forever! It has strengthened my opinion that "one size does not fit all", and sometimes you have to think outside the box in order to learn from others and better understand their perception.

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It is important that organizations prepare their staff to respond to a potential active shooter incident. Is there one particular training or protocol you recommend every employer should follow?

It is imperative that employers understand the importance of training. I recommend that active shooter training be taught annually. Continuous training teaches skills to improve your chance of survival anywhere you go in life.

Given your wealth of experience in risk management, what is one of the most impactful decisions in controlling costs a company can make and why?

I think one of the best ways to control workers compensation costs is to have an effective return to work (RTW) program. An effective RTW program helps to reduce lost time and encourages injured workers to return to modified duty. Modified duty keeps employees active and part of the team by focusing on what they can do rather than what they cannot do.

What is the most common misconception regarding workers' compensation?

I believe one of the most common misconceptions regarding workers' compensation is that claims adjusters automatically deny claims.

In closing, we realize it can be tough at times balancing your career and life outside of work. How do you keep a healthy work/life balance?

Keeping a healthy work/life balance is always a challenge! Especially in today's society where technology and social media make it very difficult to get away from work. I think it is important to take breaks from work. I try and take vacations whenever I can. A good vacation with my family clears the mind of work and helps you recoup and recharge. If I can't find the time to take a week off, I do what I call a poor person's vacation. I take off a Friday and the following Monday to give me a four-day block to enjoy some valuable time away from the rat race.



ABOUT KEN HERNANDEZ

Ken Hernandez has over twenty-seven years of experience in various aspects of Risk Management and Human Resources for both public and private sectors. His experience includes working as the Director of Risk Management for San Bernardino County, the Risk Manager for the City of San Bernardino and Orange County Sanitation District. In his current role as the Managing Director for the Law Offices of Stacey Tokunaga, he oversees three offices with 11 attorneys and a total of 26 employees. He holds a Bachelor's degree from Cal Poly Pomona, and a Juris Doctor Degree from Chapman Law School. He is a past President of Big Independent Cities Excess Pool, served on the Executive Board for CSAC-EIA and Cal-PRIMA.

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