



# CARE

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# Supervisor Wire

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## Thinking outside the box

Japanese grocery stores were faced with a problem...space. Because Japan has smaller stores than the U.S. and space is at a premium, Japan asks "how can you get the more products in a small space?" The product in question is watermelons. They are big and round and take up a lot of room. Many said there was nothing that could be done, however some Japanese farmers thought outside of the box. If the supermarkets wanted a square watermelon then how can this be provided? The solution was to place the watermelon into a square box and, as they grew, they would take on the shape of the box—thus, a square watermelon. This made both the grocery stores and the consumers happy. They were easier and less costly to ship, and they took up less space in refrigerators.

Don't presume that there is no solution. Because most people are "round watermelon" thinkers, we fail to explore alternative ways of problem solving. Things may seem unsolvable on the surface, however, by being open minded and exploring the situation from different angles, you can find a solution.

Challenge your habits. By making a conscious effort to question the way that you do things, you may find that you can improve the way you do them. Routines can be positive, however, most of us have acquired habits from various people and places without conscious effort. These habits may, or may NOT be, in our best interest.

Think Creatively. When a problem arises, broaden your approach. When the watermelon dilemma was posed most thought they were being asked how to genetically alter this fruit to take on a different shape. By looking at the question in a different way the solution was simple. Creativity can often be a learned skill that will build upon itself over time.

Find a better way. In the search to improve your efforts you must first pose the question, "Is there a better way to do this...?" Try making a list of things you wish to do better.

Nothing is impossible. If you tell yourself something is impossible, then it will be. However, if you try you will find out, through trial and error, whether it is possible. Learn from your mistakes. If you take these few steps and apply them to your daily life you may find improvement in more areas than one.

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### Rising Medical Costs for Employers

The cost of providing medical care continues to rise. It is expected to rise nearly 20 percent in the next two years. It is believed that the costs in medical care will rise and exceed the rate of inflation. Construction is a primary reason for the increase. Old facilities are being renovated to add services and new facilities are being built. This is driving up the cost that is being passed along to employers. This has caused employers to shift the cost of paying premiums to the employee, and switching to less expensive plans that increase the deductible and co-pay. Some insurance plans offer reduced rates for employees who exhibit healthy behaviors. Businesses can consider offering their employees a new smoking cessation class. Call Paddy Laske at 586.541.1555 ext 232 for details or to schedule a class.

# Disaster Readiness

“An ounce of Prevention is worth a pound of cure.” In other words, how quickly can your business respond to and recover from a disaster? This depends on the planning you do before it happens. Major disasters have nearly doubled since the last decade. We hear about it more and more everyday when we turn on the news.

With businesses in America forming the foundation of our nation’s economy, it is critical that they get back on track as soon as possible. Consider, for a moment, that small businesses make up 90% of all companies with employees. They employ 50% of all nongovernmental workers; they also provide almost 45% of the nation’s payroll. It is critical that businesses are prepared. Preparing today helps support the community and economy, and gives your business a better chance for survival. There are many low and no cost ways to prepare for a disaster.

## Disaster Readiness Ideas

- ◆ Identify the potential dangers that you or your business may face.
- ◆ Plan for and reduce the impact of disasters.
- ◆ Meet with insurance providers and review coverage.
- ◆ Create and centrally locate emergency contact lists and employee emergency contact information.
- ◆ Create list of critical businesses that you would use in an emergency.
- ◆ Make sure you have a fire extinguisher and smoke alarm.
- ◆ Decide what emergency supplies your business can provide and what employees should supply and keep.
- ◆ Have a way to communicate with employees in an emergency—phone call pyramid, password protected page on businesses website, call-in voice recording.
- ◆ Elevate valuable inventory and electrical equipment in case of flooding.
- ◆ Back up all records and critical data. Keep a copy offsite.
- ◆ Consider purchasing a generator and pre-wiring all essential electrical circuits. Have other utility options in place.
- ◆ Train a large group of employees in first aid and CPR.
- ◆ Have key employees trained in emergency response and have them keep it current.

Since there is no way to prevent a disaster from occurring, having business continuation is essential for survival. Should your business potentially face a disaster, rest assured that help is not far away. CARE’s WorkLife Solutions can also help you explore resources in our community.

## Spotlight on Safety Preventing, Responding, and Recovering From Workplace Violence

Workplace violence can be any act of physical violence, threats of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening, disruptive behavior that occurs at the worksite. Workplace violence can affect or involve employees, visitors, customers, contractors, and other non-employees.

A number of different actions in the work environment can trigger or cause workplace violence. It may even be the result of non-work-related situations such as domestic violence or “road rage.” Workplace violence can be inflicted by an abusive employee, a manager, supervisor, co-worker, customer, family member, or even a stranger. Whatever the cause or whoever the perpetrator, workplace violence is not to be accepted or tolerated.

There is no sure way to predict human behavior and while there may be warning signs, there is no specific profile of a potentially dangerous individual. The best prevention comes from identifying any problems early and dealing with them.

**CARE’s WorkLife Solutions in collaboration with SAFE Macomb, will be hosting a half-day “Safety in the Workplace Conference” at the Macomb Intermediate School District on October 15, 2008. During the conference, a “Spot Light” will shine on businesses that go above and beyond to protect its employees, customers and/or its community. Please call 866.888.1555 ext. 218 for more information on how to nominate your organization. (There is NO COST to apply and all applicants will receive recognition.) The cost to attend the conference is \$15.00 and includes a full hot breakfast.**