



# THE LLR Ledger

Winter 2010

## LLR Streamlines Services to Be More Efficient and Effective

by Teresa Higgins

The S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (LLR) has made several internal organizational changes, in the Professional and Occupational Licensing (POL) Division over the past year in an effort to reduce costs, streamline processes, achieve consistency among the professional and occupational boards, and to provide a higher quality of customer service to our licensees and other customers.

These more efficient processes were put in place after LLR requested the Budget and Control Board's Office of Human Resources in 2008 to look at the way the boards were conducting business and find ways to be more effective with their resources and services.

"The restructuring of state agencies in 1994 created LLR and brought the professional and occupational licensing boards under one department," Director Adrienne Youmans said. "Restructuring gave us the unique opportunity to bring those individual boards together so we could streamline processes the boards have in common, thus saving money and becoming more efficient. In turn, we have been able to provide our licensees and the public with a higher level of customer service and protection."

The POL Division is made up of three offices which provide services to the boards, its customers and the public: the [Office of Board Services \(OBS\)](#); the [Office of Licensure and Compliance](#); and the [Office of Investigations and Enforcement \(OIE\)](#)

The Office of Business Services was established on January 1, 2010 to provide day-to-day services to the 42 licensing boards and commissions housed in LLR's Division

of Professional and Occupational Licensing. Assistant Deputy Director Randall Bryant has been given the job of managing the Office of Business Services.

- [Contact Office of Licensure and Compliance](#)
- [Contact Office of Investigations and Enforcement](#)
- [Contact the Customer Care Center](#)

Within this Office, the internal responsibility for the boards has been divided into two groups, the health and medically related boards, and the business and building boards.

"The establishment of the Office of Business Services will allow the day-to-day operations of board business to be more uniform, efficient and effective," Bryant said. "It also will help better protect the public, which is our primary goal."

The Office of Licensure and Compliance (OLC) was established July 1, 2008, to consolidate processes dealing with initial licensure applicants, renewal applicants, and licensees requiring compliance with board orders. This office is responsible for licensing and renewing the activities of more than 130 professions and occupations with a license base of more than 250,000 individuals and businesses.

Assistant Deputy Director David Christian says the creation of the Office of Licensure and Compliance has enhanced services to boards and provided a more effective manner to process licensure applications.

"OLC provides a platform to establish consistent procedures," he said. "In addition, we are able to achieve even greater efficiency as we absorb all of the boards and fully implement the agency's new licensure management system."

The Office of Investigations and Enforcement (OIE), which was created on July 1, 2004, is responsible for investigating complaints involving a possible violation of a professional or occupational practice act. The Office also investigates labor complaints for wage disputes and child labor.

Assistant Deputy Director Rion Alvey noted that by forming one office and centralizing the investigative expertise of all LLR boards, the efficiency and effectiveness of the investigative process has greatly improved.

"The number of completed investigations has almost doubled since the inception of OIE," he stated.

In addition, a Customer Care Center (CCC) was established in 2008 to serve as a central contact point for licensees and other members of the public. The CCC staff answers questions regarding licensing requirements, status of applications, continuing education requirements and other licensing issues. The CCC also answers general questions regarding agency programs and serves as a resource for LLR's internal customers.



Byron Ray, Office of Licensure and Compliance, combs through files as he works on board renewals.

### In this issue...

- 1
- 2
- 3



Joi Middleton, Customer Care Center, strives to give the best customer service to every LLR customer.



# Worker Deaths in South Carolina Plummet in 2008

by Jim Knight

South Carolina recorded its lowest number of on-the-job fatalities in five years according to the 2008 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries issued by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)



The study found that 85 workers died in the state in 2008, compared to 122 in 2007, 95 in 2006, 132 in 2005 and 113 in 2004.

The leading cause of death was highway accidents (36), followed by assaults and violent acts (14), workers coming into contact with objects and equipment (12), falls (11), and exposure to harmful substances or environments (11).

Those working in transportation and material moving occupations were the most likely to die on the job in 2008 in the state. Workers in the professions accounted for one-third of the deaths. The next most hazardous jobs were construction and extraction occupations; sales and related occupations; installation, maintenance and repair occupations; farming, fishing and forestry occupations; and protective service occupations.

Men accounted for 95 percent of the deaths (81) in the state. Workers 45 to 54 years of age were more likely to die on the job than any other group.

57 of the 85 who died were white (non-Hispanic), 21 were black (non-Hispanic) and 7 were Hispanic or Latino.

Nationally, the BLS study counted 5,071 fatal work injuries in 2008. That was 7.6% fewer than in 2007, and 13% less than in 2006, which marked a five-year high for workplace fatalities.

The data showed fishermen/fisherwomen and other workers in fishing-related professions were the most likely to die on the job in the U.S. in 2008. Of 39,000 fishing workers in the nation, 50 were killed, a rate of 128.9 per 100,000 full-time workers. Rough seas, unpredictable

deadly weather and isolation during emergencies all make the job more unsafe than any other.

[Contact S. C. Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#)

Logging workers and aircraft pilots had the second and third deadliest jobs. Eighty-two

loggers died last year from work injuries, some of them caused by falling trees and malfunctioning cutting equipment. Ninety aircraft pilots died in crashes and other accidents.

Transportation incidents were the most common cause of fatalities, overall. Equipment and objects-related injuries came in second.

The construction industry suffered the largest number of deaths in the U.S. in 2008.

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## Immigration Office Opens for Business

by Jim Knight



Investigators in LLR's newly created Office of Immigrant Worker Compliance have conducted more than 300 inspections of businesses in the first three months since the South Carolina Illegal Immigration Reform Act became effective on July 1, 2009.

The law requires private sector employers to verify the legal status of all employees hired after July 1, 2009. The Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation is charged with responsibility for conducting random audits of businesses to determine compliance and to investigate complaints against employers under the law.

Ten investigators were hired at the outset of the program and are based across the state.

"In these economic times and high unemployment, we need every job to be filled by workers in this state who are legally in this country and are authorized to work," said Jim Knight, administrator for the program. "En-

forcement of the 'Illegal Aliens and Private Employment' law by LLR will help accomplish that goal."

Effective July 1, 2009, South Carolina businesses that employ 100 or more workers must verify the legal status of new employees and remove from their payrolls any worker who is not legally in the United States and authorized to work. Beginning July 1, 2009, all businesses in South Carolina are imputed a South Carolina employment license which permits an employer to hire employees. The imputed employment license remains in effect as long as the business abides by the law. Employers who employ less than 100 workers have until July 1, 2010 to fully comply with the law.

"Complaints have been slow to come into the agency during the first three months the law has been enforced," Knight said. "We expect the number of complaints to pick up significantly next year when the law expands to cover employers who employ less than 100 workers."

[Contact Immigrant Worker Compliance](#)

Businesses who fail to comply with the new law face monetary penalties of up \$1,000 for each worker not verified at the time of hiring. Employers who are found to have "knowingly or intentionally" employed illegal aliens can have their right to do business in the state suspended or revoked.

For more information, visit the Immigrant Worker Compliance Web site: [www.llronline.com/immigration](http://www.llronline.com/immigration).

# Fire and Life Safety Enhances Emergency Response Systems

The [Division of Fire and Life Safety](#), which includes the State Fire Marshal's Office and the [S.C. Fire Academy](#), has restructured its staff and operations to further enhance the emergency response functions it is responsible for under the State Emergency Plan.

The enhancements not only affect the fire service, but all citizens and visitors in South Carolina in the event of a natural disaster, terrorism, incident of weapons of mass destruction, fire or hazardous material event.

## These changes include:

- The S.C. National Guard and LLR jointly developed a Helicopter Air Rescue Team, which can be deployed to any location in South Carolina within two hours. This first-of-its-kind resource in the state raises the bar in emergency response capabilities.
- The Firefighter Mobilization coordinator was directed to recruit and retain firefighters within the mobilization plan. Participating departments and members have multiplied beyond expectation in the past year to nearly 5,000 firefighters.
- The Firefighter Mobilization Program was activated successfully numerous times this past year with requested firefighter mobilization responses to several areas of the state
- A new 25,000-square-foot fire station has been constructed to house nearly \$6 million of Homeland Security equipment.
- The premier S.C. Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Team, Task Force 1, supervised by a new assistant state fire marshal, is a deployable resource not only within the state but nationally.
- Five regional US&R teams have been trained and funded by the agency via homeland security grants.
- Props have been added, and others are in the development process, to offer state and national training in the area of search and rescue.
- Coordination for training with the State Emergency Management Division, S.C. National Guard, S.C. Department of Natural Resources, State Law Enforcement Division and other response agencies helps keep our staff ready for all classifications of emergencies

"These emergency response achievements have enhanced the state's Homeland Security efforts and have improved fire and life safety response capabilities to the people of South Carolina for generations to come," State Fire Marshal John Reich said.



[Contact Division of Fire and Life Safety](#)

[Contact S.C. Fire Academy](#)

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## continued from page 1 | **LLR Streamlines Services to Be More Efficient and Effective**

"Our mission is to continuously improve the quality and effectiveness of customer service provided by LLR, while at the same time allowing staff members in the licensing and program areas to perform their duties more efficiently and effectively," CCC Director Lesia Kudelka said "We have highly trained Customer Care Center representatives who are committed to providing all of the agency's customers – internal and external - with timely and accurate information and quality service."

For more information on LLR programs, please visit the Web site at [www.llronline.com](http://www.llronline.com).

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