



McAllen 12th Annual Risk & Safety Expo

June 17, 2026 - June 18, 2026 | McAllen Convention Center

Wednesday, June 17, 2026

8:30 AM - 9:00 AM

Welcome Address from City of McAllen Executive Management

Jeff Johnston - Assistant City Manager, Director of Emergency Management at City of McAllen

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Opening Keynote: Resilience: Flex Your Strongest Muscle

Track: Leadership

Can too much experience be a bad thing? Absolutely! if it leads to complacency. The highly experienced pilots of American Airlines Flight 965 were lulled into a false sense of security that led to the deaths of 160 people. As a survivor, Mercedes's™ one-of-a-kind safety presentation uses the factual account of the crash of Flight 965 as an anchor to drive home the dangers of complacency and the importance of situational awareness. Participants will clearly understand the difference between know...

Mercedes R. Johnson

10:15 AM - 11:15 AM

Avoiding Negligent Entrustment & Nuclear Verdicts Commercial Auto Risk Management Best Practices

Track: Safety & Compliance

Learn proven commercial auto risk management practices to prevent negligent entrustment claims & protect your business from nuclear verdicts. This is a critical risk management topic focused on protecting your business from catastrophic commercial auto liability. Commercial auto losses are among the most expensive claims businesses face today, with "nuclear verdicts" (jury awards exceeding \$10 million) becoming increasingly common. Negligent entrustment claims can expose your organiz...

Jim Greaves - Vice President Risk Service at HUB International

1:15 PM - 2:15 PM

Worker Recovery Mindset

Location: Room 102 | Track: Claims Management

The workers' compensation industry is currently navigating significant challenges, notably the shifting workforce dynamics due to the "grey tsunami" and "great resignation." The core issue lies in the need for professionals who not only fill positions but also deeply understand the interconnected roles of all parties involved in the system and claim advocacy. The traditional view of workers' compensation as a cost-centric and monotonous field is deterring the new generation of workers who seek m...

Melissa Steger - EVP at WorkCompCollege.com

1:15 PM - 2:15 PM

Your Dollars, Your Strategy: Evidence Based Approaches to Your Benefits

Strategy

Location: Room 103

This session provides a comprehensive look at the evolving healthcare and financial landscape facing today's employers. Through real population health data, pharmacy insights, and a transparent review of financial drivers, presenters will illustrate how employers can better understand their risks, target interventions, and make strategic decisions that improve employee health outcomes and reduce long term costs. The presentation explores: Leveraging Data: How population segmentation, chronic c...

Lauren Safranek - VP, Public Sector Consulting at Lockton

2:15 PM - 3:15 PM

Early Investigation, Thorough Evaluation & Creative Resolution Strategies for Auto Cases

Location: Room 103 | Track: Claims Management

This presentation explores ways for claims adjusters, and those partnering with attorneys, to investigate auto and commercial motor vehicle accidents. The presentation addresses how early and quick investigation can assist with thorough liability evaluation, which will generate effective, efficient, and creative resolutions to prevent extensive litigation resulting in exposure.

Jessica Junek - Attorney at Castagna Scott PLLC

Jorge Zamora - Attorney at Mayer LLP

2:15 PM - 3:15 PM

Introduction to Incident (Accident) Investigations

Location: Room 102 | Track: Safety & Compliance

There is a misconception that leads many to believe that incidents are unexpected or unplanned events in the workplace. That many not always be the case. Some incidents result from hazardous conditions and unsafe behaviors that have been ignored or tolerated for weeks, months or even years. The failure of people, equipment, supplies, or surroundings to behave or react as expected causes most incidents. Eliminating or reducing workplace accidents saves money, reduces absenteeism and in many cases...

Fernando Hernandez - Risk & Safety Manager at City of Austin

3:45 PM - 4:45 PM

Intelligence Tradecraft: Principles for Advanced Investigations

Location: Room 102 | Track: Investigations

The breadth of modern investigations has grown rapidly over the past decade. Traditional social media and background checks, one-crew surveillance, and interviews are no longer the only tools at a professional's disposal. More information than ever before is available to the end-users of intelligence, and yet traditional investigative patterns have persisted. This has wasted client money, led to unimaginative investigations with unimpactful results, and fostered a divide between what clients need...

George Flores - Partner at DigiStream Investigations

Joseph Ongay - Investigative Consultant at DigiStream Investigations

3:45 PM - 4:45 PM

Advanced Property Claims: Trends & Updates

Location: Room 103 | Track: Claims Management

This session will delve into the complexities of property claims and provide advanced insights to navigate them effectively.

Eric Botello - Associate Attorney at Pearson Legal, P.C.

Thursday, June 18, 2026

8:30 AM - 9:30 AM

Legislative (and other) Updates in Workers Compensation

Track: Workers Compensation

The one thing constant in workers' compensation is change. This fast-paced overview will survey the changes made by the legislature, the courts, and the regulators. Everything you ever wanted to know in less than 60 minutes.

Stuart Colburn - Shareholder at Downs & Stanford, P.C.

9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

From Engagement to Resolution: The Missing Link in Workforce Health, Risk Reduction, and Cost Control

Location: Room 103 | Track: Benefits and Wellness

Employee health is one of the strongest drivers of engagement, productivity, and retention — yet most workforce health strategies still focus on engagement and utilization rather than resolution. Nowhere is this more evident than in musculoskeletal (MSK) care, where employees often navigate a fragmented system of digital tools, providers, and specialists without a coordinated plan or clear outcome. The result is persistent pain, repeated care, rising claims, and increased workforce disruption....

Juan M. Gaona - STX Director of Business Development at Airrosti Rehab Centers

9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Drug & Alcohol Program Management: FMCSA Clearinghouse Dos and Don'ts / Legislative Updates on Marijuana

Location: Room 102 | Track: Drug & Alcohol

Public entities are often not aware of the changing landscape on federal workplace drug testing regulations. This gap in awareness leaves organizations vulnerable to claims, road violations and federal penalties. This session dives deep into the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Clearinghouse and how it benefits employers to utilize the platform and protect their roadways.

Larry Bauske - President at The Alcohol and Drug Testing Service (TADTS)

10:45 AM - 11:45 AM

The Six Pillars of Safety Excellence

Location: Room 102 | Track: Safety & Compliance

This course provides a comprehensive framework for establishing, maintaining, and continually improving an effective workplace safety and health program. Built around The Six Pillars of Safety Excellence: worker participation, hazard identification, hazard prevention, education and program evaluation, the class equips participants with the actionable strategies needed to transform organizational safety culture from reactive to proactive.

Ruben Mendez - Damage Prevention Manager at Texas 811

10:45 AM - 11:45 AM

Wellness in the Workplace: Treating and Preventing Musculoskeletal Injuries

Location: Room 103

Presented by DHR Health

1:15 PM - 2:15 PM

Texas 811: What You Don't Know Can Kill You

Location: Room 103 | Track: Safety & Compliance

“Texas 811” What You Don’t Know Can Kill You is a powerful safety presentation focused on the life-saving importance of the Texas 811 damage prevention system. Participants will learn how underground utility strikes occur, the legal responsibilities of excavators under Texas law, and the critical steps required before digging. Through real-world examples, incident analysis, and practical field guidance, this session highlights the hidden dangers beneath our feet and explains how a simp...

Ruben Mendez - Damage Prevention Manager at Texas 811

1:15 PM - 2:15 PM

Bridging HR & Risk: What You Didn't Know You Needed to Know

Location: Room 102 | Track: Human Resources

Every HR move—from the first interview to the final exit—is a high-stakes risk event for your city. This session moves past basic compliance to show Texas municipal leaders how to bridge the gap between HR and Risk Management to shield their budgets and reduce liability. We’ll dig into the real cost of risk, showing how simple documentation gaps can lead to \$100k+ hits to insurance premiums. You’ll walk away with a "COI Masterclass" checklist to audit vendor insurance like a pro, plus a ...

Kristina Peters - AVP, Sr. Consultant at Charlesworth Consulting

2:15 PM - 3:15 PM

Roundtable Panel Discussion: "Navigating Risk When Risk Gets Real"

Location: Room 103 | Track: Workers Compensation

That moment hits fast—things shift, and it’s go time. In those early stages of an incident, decisions come quickly, information is still unfolding, and the pressure is on. This session brings together perspectives from risk management, claims, and medical coordination to unpack what really happens in those critical moments. Through real-world insights and shared experiences, we’ll explore how early alignment, clear communication, and care decisions shape recovery, claims outcomes, and long...

Matthew Worthington - Workers’ Compensation Program Director at Pam Health

Fernando Hernandez - Risk & Safety Manager at City of Austin

Jorge Camorlinga - Claims Supervisor at United Fire Group Insurance

3:45 PM - 4:45 PM

Closing Keynote: Reputation Management

Track: Human Resources

Today there are a number of risks facing the corporate as well as government and nonprofit sectors. Most such challenges, however, are less about technology, systems and protocols, and more about people. This presentation by Jeff McKissack of Defense By Design will address those lesser recognized human issues in the three primary areas of physical, data and reputational risk as well as points of liability, points of mitigation, and points of documentation to reduce potential claims of negligence...

Jeff McKissack - President at Defense By Design

