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LWCC shares Mardi Gras safety advice for LA businesses



Mardi Gras will end Feb. 17, and with less than two weeks left to enjoy the party, Louisiana's Workers' Compensation Carrier (LWCC) is providing tips to follow this time of year. SCOTT CLAUSE/USATODAY NETWORK

Plan ahead to reduce the risk

Aaron Gonsoulin
Lafayette Daily Advertiser
USA TODAY NETWORK

With Mardi Gras season in full swing, increased safety is a top concern for parade-goers and businesses across Louisiana.

Mardi Gras will end Feb. 17, and with less than two weeks left to enjoy the party, Louisiana's Workers' Compensation Carrier (LWCC) is providing tips to follow this time of year.

LWCC, the state's largest workers' comp company, has a Safety Services team in place that works year-round with Louisiana businesses to help identify risks, strengthen safety practices and prepare for the unexpected, according to a news release.

"Mardi Gras brings a lot of energy and activity, which can be great for business," Damian Simoneaux, LWCC Safety Services manager, said. "Taking

time to plan ahead helps businesses reduce risk, protect their employees, and stay focused on serving customers, even during the busiest days of the season."

LWCC's Safety Services team outlined the following considerations to help businesses prepare for a safe and successful Mardi Gras season.

Mardi Gras Safety Tips

Mardi Gras can disrupt normal routines, from road closures to altered work schedules. Businesses should plan staffing and operations changes.

It is also important to consider transportation and parking challenges, LWCC said. Sharing parking details, ride-share options, and flexible scheduling can reduce stress and support safer commuting during peak days.

Clear communication helps employees and parade-goers get to work safely,

get home safely and know who to contact if issues arise.

Prepare your facility

Before festivities begin, take time to inspect your facility. Ensure doors, windows and locks are in good working order and confirm that entrances and exits are clearly marked and unobstructed.

With increased foot traffic, businesses should watch for slip, trip and fall risks by keeping walkways clear, addressing spills promptly and monitoring high-traffic areas.

If customer flow or access points change due to increased crowds or temporary layouts, take time to review those changes to help ensure they support safe movement throughout the space.

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Higgins urging USDA to buy Gulf shrimp

Congressman seeks to offset cheap imports

Greg Hilburn
Shreveport Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

Louisiana Congressman Clay Higgins is urging U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins to make a federal purchase of wild-caught Gulf of America shrimps as domestic shrimpers struggle to survive with cheap imports flooding the American market.

Higgins, a Republican from Lafayette, sent a letter to Rollins making the request through Section 32 of the Agricultural Adjustment Act.

Last year the USDA bought about 30 million pounds of domestic shrimp, said Louisiana Shrimp Association President Acy Cooper.

"We definitely support this program," Cooper said in an interview with USA Today Network. "It helps us move the shrimp that has piled up because of all the cheaper imports."

Higgins' request asks that the agency prioritize smaller-grade peeled un deveined shrimp.

"This program has been successful since 2020, providing support to domestic fishermen who are facing difficulties due to imported seafood dumping and unfair trade practices," Higgins said in a statement.

"Our domestic shrimpers face unrighteous competition from the billions of pounds of inferior, imported shrimp that cross our borders each year from nations such as India and Indonesia, which undercut U.S. producers," Higgins wrote in his letter.

"In fact, recent reports show the recall of potentially radioactive imported Indonesian shrimp across scores of U.S. states," he wrote. "Given

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LA ranked sixth most affordable state by U.S. News & World Report

Presley Bo Tyler
Shreveport Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

While the cost of living in the U.S. as a whole seems to be steadily increasing, there are some states that are much cheaper than others.

The cost of living refers to basic affordability, which includes the cost of housing as well as the average spending of a household.

In order to decipher which states cost more or less to live in, U.S. News & World Report analyzed states' cost of living,

housing affordability and economic opportunity.

The state of Louisiana ranked sixth overall for affordability, falling within the top 10 most affordable states, according to U.S. News & World Report.

At a closer look, the state ranks number five for cost of living and number eight for housing affordability. However, the state ranked number 46 for opportunity and at number 50 on U.S. News & World Report's ranking of the best states overall.

The national cost of living in the U.S. averages to around \$72,967 spent annually,

meanwhile Louisiana's average cost of living is around 11.7% cheaper, meaning that Louisiana residents spend about \$6,236 annually.

Despite a lower cost of living, the state's median household income, which is approximately \$58,229, is lower than the national average of approximately \$76,976.

Additionally, the poverty rate in Louisiana is higher than the national average, which is around 12.2%, with approximately 18.9% of the state's residents living in poverty.

Most and least affordable states according to U.S. News & World Report

1. Arkansas
2. Mississippi
3. West Virginia
4. South Dakota
5. Oklahoma
6. Louisiana
7. Iowa
8. Alabama
9. North Dakota

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