RAM Business Essentials

The Retailers Association of Massachusetts is committed to helping retail businesses, small and large, thrive in the commonwealth. RAM recognizes the challenges of today's small businesses, from the struggle to find and retain a strong workforce, the pressures of government regulations, and all the various administrative requirements necessary to run your company. Small business owners wear many hats in most instances. As such, we've assembled a whole host of valuable business solutions designed to alleviate some of this administrative burden and in many cases, save time and money. Whether you choose to use one of these benefits or the full suite, we're sure you will find value in your business operations.

JON HURST
RAM President

FEATURED MEMBER BENEFITS

BENEFIT 01 — Why Join RAM

BENEFIT 02 — Workers' Compensation Insurance

BENEFIT 03 — RAMHIC (Health Insurance)

BENEFIT 04 — Multiple Employer 401K Plan

BENEFIT 05 — Credit Card Processing

BENEFIT 06 — Additional Benefits

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WHY JOIN RAM

The Retailers Association of Massachusetts (RAM), established in 1918, is a statewide trade association of thousands of companies. Our membership ranges from independent, owner operated stores to larger, national chains operating in the general retail, restaurant and service sectors of the retail industry. The industry's contributions to the Commonwealth include over $150 billion in annual sales; 24% of all Massachusetts jobs; and operations in over 88,000 locations across the state.

Why should I join?

We are your voice in state government

Our legislative and policy team is keenly engaged in both the legislative and regulatory fronts for all issues impacting the retail community. RAM members are kept up-to-date on issues through a bimonthly newsletter, regular bulletins, e-newsletters and our website, www.retailersma.org. Only RAM has a full-time lobbying staff dedicated to serving all types of sellers, from hard goods to soft goods. RAM follows and actively lobbies all issues affecting retail employers, representing the following membership sectors:

- Appliance & Electronics
- Auto Repair, Service & Sales
- Clothing, Footwear & Accessories
- Grocery & Convenience
- Furniture & Home Décor
- Gift & Jewelry
- Hardware & Home Improvement
- Restaurant & Hospitality
- Cannabis Retailers

Over the past decade, RAM has led several high profile fights, including efforts to update the Blue Laws, clarify overtime requirements, update item pricing requirements and to create a Sales Tax Holiday. In addition, we have been a leader in preventing the passage of numerous items which would have adversely affected the competitiveness and bottom lines of local retail sector employers.

We have also streamlined your ability to participate in the process. By using RAM's state of the art online advocacy center, located on our website www.retailersma.org , members can contact their legislators on issues of importance and make their voices heard - in just a few minutes.

Benefits of RAM Membership

As a member of RAM, you and your business will benefit from RAM's expertise, resources and group purchasing discounts. Your RAM membership is one of the best investments you can make for your business.

From legislation regarding the high cost of health insurance for small businesses to technical information releases from the Department of Revenue about the Sales Tax Holiday, RAM is there to make sure that the best interests of the industry are protected.

Membership in RAM provides you access to exclusive money saving discounts and services and programs, legislative updates and advocacy as well as valuable education opportunities. We aim to help you grow and protect your business, promote the retail industry and save you money.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION
WITH SAFETY & SAVINGS

Savings & Safety

Massachusetts Retail Merchants Workers Compensation Group

Retailers, Wholesalers, Hospitality, Auto Service, Cannabis, Breweries, Golf & Country Clubs Businesses

This unique association program, the **Massachusetts Retail Merchants Workers' Compensation Group,** is a self-insured group that saves you money when the combined premiums of all members are invested, and profits for the group are distributed back to members in dividends. To date, $80 million in dividends have been generated for members dating back to inception of the program. The lifetime average dividend to members has been a return of 20% of premium.

What started as a group of a few hundred retailers and restaurants in 1991 has now grown to over 4,000 businesses, including some of the most prominent retail, wholesale, hospitality, auto service and cannabis businesses in the Commonwealth.

Why this workers' compensation program is so great!

- Member-Owned Insurance Group
- Superior Premium Savings
- Lifetime Average Dividend over 20%
- Local Claims Management Expertise
- Proactive Safety Consulting Services
- Pay-Go to Replace Audit Stress
- Administered by Industry Leading WC Specialist, Cove Risk

Save on Workers' Comp - Exclusive member benefit of RAM

1. Request a quote via phone: RAM office at 617-523-1900

2. Request a quote online: www.coverisk.com/get-a-quote/

scan for a quote

3. Ask your Insurance Agent to connect with us to sign you up.

* Past dividend history is no guaranty of future results. Participation in a workers' compensation self-insurance group is not the equivalent of purchasing an insurance policy. For qualified risks only.

RAMHIC OFFERING:

LARGE GROUP BENEFITS FOR SMALL RETAIL EMPLOYERS

With Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, you're backed by a health insurance leader that's uniquely positioned to improve health care. Blue Cross' unrivaled network of relationships with providers, agents, and business groups can mean deeper discounts, better care, and benefits that are customized to you.

The Retailers Association of Massachusetts Health Insurance Cooperative (RAMHIC) provides our small retailers with large group benefits. RAM employers and their employees can now take advantage of the following benefits:

- Vision plan, administered by Blue 20/20[1]
- Employee Assistance Program, administered by Lucet, an independent company[1]
- Fee waiver for HealthEquity® personal spending account (available at renewal)[2,4]
- A 1% employer wellness reward, administered by RAMHIC
- Accident coverage, administered by USAble Life®, an independent company[3]
- $10,000 Group Life Insurance, administered by USAble Life[3]
- Hospital Indemnity plan, administered by USAble Life[3]
- RAMHIC Wellness Program, administered by Personify Health®
- Human Resources Services and Platform, adminstered by Mineral®
- Dental Blue® and Blue Cross Blue Shield Global Solutions℠ health insurance plans, at an additional cost to the employer

Participation in this program requires membership in RAM. Year-one RAM dues start at $50. In addition to RAMHIC, membership also provides access to benefits including workers' compensation, credit card processing, 401(k), policy advocacy, and more.

For more information about membership contact RAM at **1-617-523-1900** or **info@retailersma.org**

1. Available to groups with 1-50 enrolled employees; coverage includes dependents
2. Available to groups of 1-50 enrolled employees
3. Available to groups with 2-50 enrolled employees, covering subscribers only
4. Cannabis industry benefits are limited by federal law.

QUESTIONS?

For more information, contact Inside Sales at **1-888-723-4840** or **insidesales@bcbsma.com** or contact your broker.

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MITRATECH Mineral | RAM RETAILERS ASSOCIATION OF MASSACHUSETTS

HR & Compliance. Built In to Your Membership.

Mitratech Mineral is included with any BCBSMA plan purchased through RAMHIC — a complete HR and compliance platform that saves time, reduces risk, and gives your team the answers they need without an in-house HR department.

Why it Matters

Running a retail business means navigating HR questions, employment law changes, and compliance requirements — often without a dedicated HR team. RAM members who carry their health coverage through RAMHIC get Mitratech Mineral included with their BCBSMA plan — a complete HR and compliance platform used by thousands of businesses nationwide. Ready to put Mineral to work for your business? RAMHIC membership is where it starts.

$160K+
Average cost of one employment lawsuit

$300–$2,500
Attorney advice per question

$50K/yr
Typical LMS training platform cost

96%
Of organizations recommend Mineral

What Mineral Gives You

On-Demand HR Experts

Certified HR professionals answer your hiring, termination, wage law, and time-off questions without the $300/hour attorney fees.

Real-Time Compliance Alerts

Mineral monitors federal, state, and local law and alerts you automatically when something affects your Massachusetts retail business.

Custom Employee Handbooks

Create a legally sound, state-specific handbook in minutes. Updates push automatically when laws change — no law firm needed.

500+ Training Courses

Harassment prevention, cybersecurity, workplace safety, and leadership development all built in with no extra LMS required.

Compliance Library

Easy-to-understand guides, templates, and best practices for hiring, performance management, and employee retention. Available 24/7.

Wage & Hour Compliance

Massachusetts wage and hour law is among the most complex in the country. Mineral keeps retail employers ahead of minimum wage updates, overtime rules, tip pooling, and scheduling requirements.

What Mineral Saves You

$3K–$25K
saved by avoiding attorney calls

$10K–$50K
saved annually by eliminating a separate LMS platform

$160K+
protected by avoiding a single employment lawsuit

$2K–$10K
saved per handbook vs. law firm creation costs

"Before Mineral, I would spend hours searching for answers to HR questions, only to come up with questionable results. Mineral has helped me significantly cut down the time I spend and helps me get just what I need."

— Janna Murphy | Operations Manager · Health Care for Women

96% of organizations recommend Mineral.

Already a RAMHIC member?

Your Mineral access is already active. Log in at apps.trustmineral.com. If you do not know your username, click "Forgot Username" to retrieve it.

Questions: RAMHIC@trustmineral.com

Not yet on a RAMHIC plan?

Mineral is available to you the moment you join RAMHIC. Contact RAM to learn more about adding a BCBSMA plan through the cooperative.

WHAT IS A MULTIPLE EMPLOYER 401K PLAN?

Through your association with RAM, you are able to join a Multiple Employer Plan (MEP) — a qualified retirement plan adopted by multiple employers, with one organization acting as the lead sponsor. The government recognizes the MEP as if it were a single plan, but each employer who adopts into the plan may select its own provisions. Employers who participate are able to outsource many responsibilities that come with running a retirement plan, and often, help reduce costs.

Why consider joining a MEP?

Because every business owner tells us the same thing: They want a retirement plan solution that...

Is Easy

Situation: They want to focus on their business — they don't want to be a 401(k) expert.

Solution: The MEP can become their 401(k) department, performing most of the administrative tasks for their plan, including handling their regular contribution files.

Protects them

Situation: They don't want to be at risk of paying fines or penalties.

Solution: By joining a MEP, employers can avoid much of the compliance concerns that come with offering their own plan. While their role as plan fiduciary still exists, many specific tasks transition to the MEP. The employer's ongoing role is to oversee the various parties dedicated to the plan to ensure it operates as expected.

Is cost competitive

Situation: They don't want to overpay.

Solution: The MEP delivers more value and services — potentially at similar or less cost than they are already paying. And, as plans grow, they're reviewed regularly for price reductions.

REDUCING WORK, RESPONSIBILITIES AND LIABILITIES

There's more to the fiduciary role than good intentions, or even good returns. It's essential to ensure key responsibilities are met and to adopt a prudent process for selecting and monitoring investment options. A MEP may offer the fiduciary protection many plan sponsors need.

Your Responsibilities BEFORE Joining a MEP

Plan sponsor duties

- Design plan document
- Maintain qualified status
- Assign and oversee all other plan fiduciaries

Plan investment fiduciary duties

- Appoint and monitor plan investment fiduciary duties for all other plan fiduciaries
- Produce, maintain and follow an Investment Policy Statement (IPS)
- Select and monitor an investment platform meeting ERISA "prudent person" standards
- Conduct and document quarterly Investment Committee meetings
- Review and document investment returns, fees, expenses and comparisons to peer group
- Monitor the status of all investment options and remove or replace them as appropriate

Operational plan administrator duties

- Deposit contributions and submit payroll files for upload on a timely basis
- Complete annual ownership and census verification for testing purposes
- Oversee annual census reconciliation with third party administrator (TPA)
- Oversee and manage the annual Form 5500 filing process in conjunction with a TPA
- Determine participant eligibility
- Conduct enrollment and educational meetings
- Address specific participant requests in compliance with the 404(a)(5) participant fee disclosure regulation
- Administer participant loans in compliance with statutory requirements
- Verify termination dates and vesting, and send out participant termination packets
- Administer distribution and rollover requests for terminated employees
- Administer hardship withdrawals in compliance with the hardship rules, included in provisions of the Pension Protection Act (PPA) of 2006
- Review and validate compliance testing
- Send out required year-end notices to participants (that is, Safe Harbor, summary annual report (SAR) and so forth)
- Send out enrollment packets, including summary plan description (SPD), 404(c) compliance information, Qualified Default Investment Alternative (QDIA) and annual participant fee disclosure 404(a)(5)
- Comply with DOL Regulation Section 2550.404(a)(5) provisions for participant communications, including but not limited to:
  - Notice to participants of intention to comply with 404(c)
  - Description of investment alternatives
  - General description of the investment objectives and risk-and-return characteristics of each alternative
  - Explanation of transaction fees and expenses that affect the participant's account balance
  - Details about the plan fiduciaries
  - Description of annual operating expenses of each designative alternative
  - Copies of prospectuses, financial statements and reports provided to the plan

Your Responsibilities AFTER Joining a MEP

Initial choices

- Sign initial paperwork agreement
- Select customized plan design options to meet your business needs

Ongoing duties

- Deposit contributions and submit payroll files for upload on a timely basis
- Periodically monitor the Plan and any third parties managing administrative and fiduciary tasks to ensure plan provisions are being carefully administered
- **Complete your annual** ownership and census verification for testing purposes

CREDIT CARD PROCESSING MEMBER BENEFIT

Take Advantage of the Retailers Association of Massachusetts' Credit Card Processing Benefits at EXTRA

SAVINGS

RAM has several partners, including MI Retailers Association's Retailers Processing Network. Together we have custom designed credit card programs that offer such benefits as:

REDUCED OR ELIMINATED CASH RESERVES

Now, any company that must tie up capital by establishing a large cash reserve with a processor can eliminate or reduce its reserve by processing through RAM. Businesses can pull back cash reserves into their operations to pay for new inventory or improvements.

ONLINE TRANSACTIONS

RAM allows you to take credit card payments on your web site at reduced costs.

NO HIDDEN FEES

Hidden fees in credit processing systems cost businesses thousands of dollars each year. Typical fees include: Voice Authorization Fees, Monthly Minimum Penalties, Application Fees and Programming Fees.

UNPARALLELED SUPPORT

RAM's partners offer 24/7 support from real people, not computers.

PCI COMPLIANCE

Between the elimination of hidden fees and the reduction or elimination of cash reserves, your savings could total thousands, or even tens of thousands of dollars each year … without compromising service

RAM
RETAILERS ASSOCIATION OF MASSACHUSETTS

Additional RAM Benefits

ConnectPay

The PAY-AS-YOU-PAYROLL program was developed specifically for retail businesses, like yours, to deliver FULLY INTEGRATED WORKERS' COMP.

Top 5 reasons hundreds of businesses are in the program: 1. Improved Cash Flow 2. Reduced Audit Surprises 3. Continued Money-Saving Premiums 4. No more Future Down Payments 5. 30% Payroll Processing Discount for Association Members.

EFFICIENT. SEAMLESS. COST-EFFECTIVE. Our dedicated client service delivers efficient solutions for your unique business needs, along with seamless integration of Cove Risk Workers' Comp Insurance to free you up to focus on your business.

CONNECT WITH US — to realize the savings of time and money that so many of your business neighbors have discovered.
www.connectpayusa.com

Altus Dental

We are excited to share how Altus Dental's latest offerings can help you grow your business and deliver significant savings. Our benefits, including the Preventive Rewards Program, SmileMore Enhancements, DMS, and Altus Vision™, empower your employees to focus on preventive dental care while enjoying extra savings on vision care without stretching their budgets.

Partnering with Altus Dental means enhancing your dental and vision benefits and discovering new opportunities for growth!
www.altusdental.com

Fixed Rate Electricity Supply Program and Community Solar

The Retailers Association of Massachusetts (RAM) continues to partner with electricity broker Freedom Energy Logistics (FEL) to secure Fixed Rate Electric Supply Pricing formembers. The fixed rate program is secure Fixed Rate Electric Supply Pricing for members. The fixed rate program is designed to protect your business against unexpected price fluctuations commonly experienced in the electricity market. This allows members to confidently budget their annual electricity costs.
www.felpower.com

RAM is proud to partner with Ampion to provide our members with access to the Massachusetts-authorized shared Community Solar Program. The program allows your business to purchase discounted utility bill credits designed to offset and reduce electricity costs. With no upfront costs and nothing to install, it's the easiest way for your business to benefit from solar energy while saving money on electricity costs.
www.ampion.net

NRF Reciprocal Membership

The National Retail Federation (NRF) is the world's largest retail trade association, representing discount and department stores, home goods and specialty stores, Main Street merchants, grocers, wholesalers, chain restaurants and Internet retailers from the United States and more than 45 countries. As an NRF member, your entire team will have access to resources like: Stay Connected, Research and Insights, and other NRH events to learn from leaders and visionaries.
www.nrf.com

PopMenu

Popmenu optimizes restaurants' website menu into a true customer conversion engine. Popmenu gives you power over reviews, menu management tools, social posting, email distribution and more. A truly revolutionary approach to providing control and giving the power to the restaurant. It creates efficiencies, saves money from current solutions, and drives profit. Truly a revenue generation tool.
www.get.popmenu.com

RETAILERS ASSOCIATION OF MASSACHUSETTS

Scan to Reach the RAM Team

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