



Serving County Government

Safety Shorts

General Safety, Highway, & Law Enforcement

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Boysen County Government

January 2023 - Volume 11, Number 1

January Is Get Organized Month

There are many ways of being organized, but some of us certainly have better organizational skills than others. A bit of organization can make even the most chaotic of spaces relatively manageable. Sometimes being organized is actually a safety issue. Leading an organized life is not easy because it requires a lot of foresight, planning, and time management skills. However, an organized life is the most effective when it comes to optimizing productivity.

Studies show that individuals waste up to an hour every day on average, searching for things that they've misplaced. As such, we definitely agree with the sentiment that everyone can stand to benefit from getting and staying organized - <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development>.

Wishing you a Happy and Joyful New Year. Best wishes from your friends at NIRMA.

GENERAL SAFETY

By Chad Engle, Loss Prevention and Safety Manager

Slip, Trip and Fall Prevention

This first round of snow (for us Eastern Nebraska folks anyway) will be melted and gone by the time you read this. Unfortunately, multiple NIRMA member employees and courthouse visitors have already suffered slip and fall injuries due to ice and snow. It's common this time of year but that doesn't mean it can't be prevented.

- * Start with timely and thorough snow removal.
- * Place the snow pile in a location where it will not run back onto the sidewalk when it melts as it can re-freeze and create another hazard.
- * Use salt/sand/ice melt in those areas where a slip hazard remains.
- * Document snow removal to include times and the amount of salt/sand/ice melt that was used. This information is very useful when defending liability claims resulting from slip and fall injuries.
- * Continue to monitor problem areas after snowfall ceases and initial snow removal is complete.
- * Pay extra attention to stairs, entrances, and other high traffic areas.

Slip, Trip and Fall Prevention – *continued*

- * Ensure there are sufficient floor mats in place to allow visitors to dry off their shoes upon entering. Soaked floor mats should be replaced with dry mats.
- * Ensure floor mats lay flat on the floor. If the mat is starting to curl at the ends or has become stretched out and won't flatten along the long edges, it should be replaced. Worn mats create additional trip hazards. The last thing we need is an additional trip hazard near a wet entrance!
- * Continuously monitor floors near entrances and mop up tracked in water. "CAUTION WET FLOOR" signs should be placed with conditions warrant.

In addition to taking the precautions outlined above, we need to be thinking of our own safety when we are out and about during the winter months.

- * Wear the correct footwear for the conditions.
- * Use cleats when you must walk in icy conditions.
- * If you don't have cleats, it is safer to walk in the snow than on the ice.
- * Watch where you are walking and avoid ice.
- * If you must walk on ice, take short steps, move slowly, walk flat-footed, like a penguin.

It would be a shame to start out the new year with fall related injury. Please be mindful of weather conditions and have a plan to deal with them.

I am looking forward to 2023 and working with you on your county and agency loss prevention programs. If you are considering training before spring gets here, please give us a call sooner rather than later as the calendar fills up quickly. As always, I can be reached at 1.800.642.6671 or chad@nirma.info.

Last Call for Safety Committee Minutes – January 31, 2023, Deadline

One last friendly reminder that 2022 safety committee minutes must be submitted to NIRMA by 5:00 pm central time on January 31st if you wish to be considered for the Money for Minutes awards.

To be eligible for one of the five \$500.00 Money for Minutes awards your safety committee must have met at least quarterly, submitted copies of each meeting's minutes and during those meetings each incident/event/injury that occurred during the previous quarter needs to be discussed. The discussion needs to include recommendations as to how to keep similar events from reoccurring. All member counties and agencies that meet those requirements will be placed in a random drawing for one of five \$500.00 awards.

Feel free to reach out if you have questions. I can be reached at 1.800.642.6671 or chad@nirma.info.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

By K C Pawling, Road Safety and Loss Prevention Specialist

Safety Meetings Made Easy...and Possibly Fun?

I think we can all agree that our employees are the most valuable asset that we can have. Their abilities, knowledge, and experience are hard if not impossible in some cases to replace. These last few years have really demonstrated how much of a challenge it is to find good, qualified individuals to bring on board as part of our team. Unemployment in Nebraska is extremely low, so it is a challenge to find potential employees. We know we should be thinking outside the box to come up with creative ways to retain employees so we can avoid the arduous process of finding new team members, but what are we doing to keep them safe? Isn't that just as important? My experience has taught me that it is even more important. It is one thing to lose an employee to another business that was able to offer them something different than we could, but it is even worse to lose them to an injury or even, God forbid, a fatality. When we are focusing on retention, shouldn't a good safety program be part of that focus?

As a highway superintendent, I always seemed to struggle with finding the time to have safety meetings. It's not that I didn't see them as important or necessary, it's just that the road department was always under pressure to work while the weather was cooperative. Before I knew it, we just kept pushing the meeting dates back farther and farther. After getting the date nailed down, it was always what are we going to do for material? Other than reviewing our incidents and near-misses, what are we going to talk about? Do we have NIRMA come in and present some training for us? How about the power company, they have an interesting demo trailer that will roast hot dogs and pickles via energized power lines . . . Yes, it was not only cool to see but also very eye-opening to see their demo and all the potential hazards working around powerlines.

Well, if your mind is racing to answer the questions I just asked, I have some good news. NIRMA has great resources (in addition to the great loss prevention staff) available online for safety meetings.

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Safety Source Online Training Videos

The first resource is the on-demand video training located at nirma.safetysourceonline.com. You will need to get your county an account if it does not have one already, but there is a numerous amount of safety videos available. Most of the videos are anywhere between 5 minutes to 30 minutes long and cover a variety of safety topics.

NIRMA University Online Training Videos

Another resource offered to NIRMA members is NIRMA Online University. It is powered by a different partner agency, Lexipol, so is accessed through a different link on NIRMA's website: localgovu.com/nirma. After sitting and working through a few modules, I came away very impressed with the material and delivery of the material. Again, you will have

Safety Meetings Made Easy...and Possibly Fun? - *continued*

to set up an account and get logged in, but the effort is worth it. The modules through this resource are typically anywhere from 5 minutes to one hour in length. Some of topics covered include:

- Equipment Safety examples:
 - Chainsaw safety
 - Dump truck safety
 - Excavation safety and operation
- Roadway and Highway examples:
 - Guide to temporary traffic control in work zones
 - Roadway maintenance
 - Snow and Ice management
 - Understanding the MUTCD
- General Human Resource topics
- General Management skills
- General safety topics
 - Commercial Motor Vehicle safety
 - Dealing with cold and heat stress

These are just a few of the topics that you have access to. I would be remiss if I did not mention that the NIRMA Online University delivery method is different than just sitting down and watching a video. The delivery method used is very interactive. You will work through the modules and then answer questions and receive a score on how well you retain the information. If you are a manager, you can become an administrator and set up accounts for each of your employees and assign modules to your employees that they need to complete. Or you can also work through the modules collectively as a group, maybe make a game of it. As I was recently reminded by a MSHA (Mine Safety and Health Administration) Trainer, safety training does not have to be boring, and either way you are exposing your employees to some great material.

Coming Soon: The Energized Approach

As Chad covered in last month's Safety Shorts, NIRMA is offering a new platform that will be introduced in a webinar for members via Zoom on January 11 at 10:00 a.m. Find the link to join the webinar in NIRMA's calendar of events [here](#). It includes training for managers on how to make a safety program more appealing to employees and will allow access to another whole library of videos and resources on injury prevention that can be used in safety meetings.

If you need help working through account set-up, or have any other questions or concerns, let us know, we are here to help. I can be reached at kcpawling@nirma.info or 402-310-4417 call or text. Let's make sure we all make it home every night!

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CORRECTIONS

Todd Duncan, Law Enforcement and Safety Specialist

Bringing Order to Chaos, Part 1

If you have spent any time in a law enforcement leadership role, you know what it is like to be faced with taking charge of a chaotic situation. For example, consider the following scenario: Law enforcement officers from your agency and a neighboring jurisdiction attempt to stop a vehicle with two individuals inside who just committed a serious crime in nearby town, a pursuit ensues, the suspect vehicle crashes, one occupant is seriously injured, and the other escapes on foot. As the supervisor in charge of the incident, you have multiple issues to address including rendering aid to the injured suspect, securing/processing the original crime scene, securing the second scene (vehicle crash/escape), preserving evidence, coordinating the fugitive search, delegating tasks to the deputies/offices on scene, talking to the media who are gathering nearby, briefing the sheriff on what you are dealing with, etc. Having a proven system to manage an incident like this and delegate tasks effectively can bring order to chaos, enhance public safety, and bring the incident to resolution as quickly and smoothly as possible.

For decades, the fire service has relied upon an incident command structure to organize and manage large numbers of responders and resources during major disasters. In the wake of the terrorist attacks on 9/11, then President Bush issued the directive to create a single, national incident management system (NIMS) that would enable responders at all jurisdictional levels and across all disciplines to work together more effectively and efficiently. After evaluating existing command and control systems, the Incident Command System (ICS) became the foundation of the newly created NIMS. The ICS system is intended to be both flexible and scalable, making it useful for managing a variety of situations, whether it is a large pre-planned event or a bank robbery involving a multijurisdictional response.

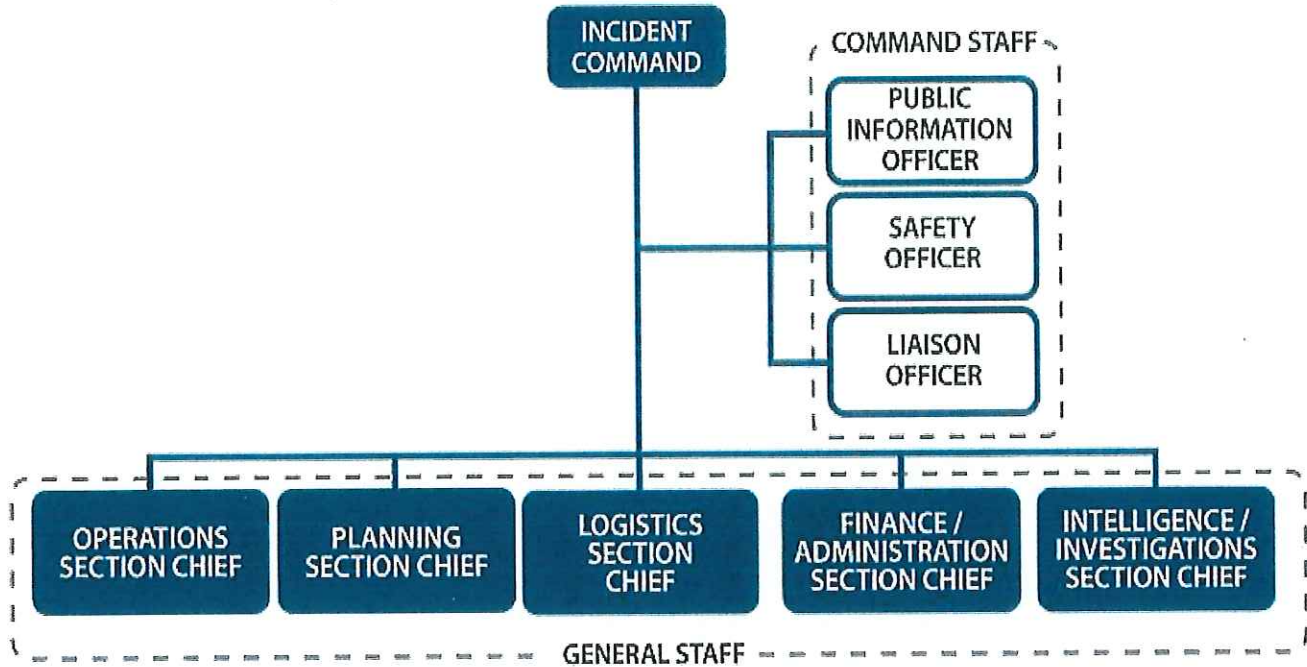
The Incident Command System thrives on management by objective. Law enforcement is often reactive to major situations until they are resolved. However, ICS allows leaders to manage by objectives and respond proactively by establishing a clear chain of command and written incident action plan (IAP) to achieve those objectives.

The ICS provides a way to bring all involved personnel and resources from one or more agencies into a single operating picture and orderly chain of command. The chain of command may have a single incident commander (IC), or a unified command (UC) team made up of leadership from involved stakeholder agencies depending on the size and scope of the incident. All other elements of the ICS command structure remain the same, regardless of whether the incident is being led by an IC or UC.

The four core functional areas or "sections" of the ICS structure that report to the IC/UC are known as the General Staff and may or may not be filled by a Section Chief depending on the nature of the incident. These functional areas are Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration.

The Command Staff also reports directly to the IC/UC and like the General Staff, may or may not be filled depending on the nature of the incident. The Command Staff is made up of a Public Information Officer (PIO), Safety Officer, and Liaison.

Bringing Order to Chaos, Part 1 - *continued*



Regardless of whether the IC/UC chooses to fill the positions within the Command and General Staff, the *duties* of each of these positions must be considered and assigned to someone. For instance, if the IC chooses not to assign someone to the safety officer role, then the IC is responsible for ensuring the safety of operations and involved personnel. You may look at this command model with nine positions when fully staffed and ask, how realistic is this for a two- or three-person agency? The reality is, if you have a major incident or event in your jurisdiction, the odds are personnel from other agencies or counties will be involved and will require coordination. Another benefit of the ICS system is that the roles and sections are based on key tasks or operational areas inherent to nearly every type of major incident, so it helps incident commanders identify critical tasks and delegate them to personnel efficiently.

In summary, ICS is a powerful system that can help you organize chaos. Because it is scalable, it can be used on a relatively small incident like a roll-over crash involving one or more lane closures or a major investigation like a man hunt. It can also be used to manage pre-planned situations like outdoor music festivals or large sporting events.

To learn more about the NIMS/ICS visit [FEMA's NIMS/ICS website](#) and consider completing the following basic NIMS/ICS courses:

- ICS-100, Introduction to Incident Command System
- ICS-200, ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents
- ICS-700, National Incident Management System: An Introduction
- ICS-800, National Response Plan: An Introduction

Next month we will go into more detail on Incident Action Plans (IAP) which are prepared by the IC/UC with input from the General Staff describing operational goals and objectives as well as how resources will be coordinated and used to respond to a specific incident.

Bringing Order to Chaos, Part 1 - *continued*

Please contact Todd at 531-510-7446 (cell) or tduncan@nirma.info if you have any questions.

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