

NIRMA's

Loss Prevention and Safety Department Monthly Newsletter

NIRMA's Safety Shorts
General Safety, Highway & Law Enforcement



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June 2022

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June
Is
National
Safety
Month

Workplace safety culture begins with a well-trained workforce. Employees trained on safety programs make their workplaces safer for everyone.



GENERAL SAFETY

By Chad Engle, Loss Prevention and Safety Specialist

June is National Safety Month!

June is our month, safety people, June is National Safety Month. During National Safety Month the Nebraska Safety Council focuses on Musculoskeletal Disorders during week one, Workplace Impairment during week two, Injury Prevention during week three and Slips, Trips and Falls during week four.

NIRMA's relationship with the Nebraska Safety Council provides a membership to each NIRMA County or Agency. Now would be a wonderful time to contact them and register for your own county or agency login Id and password to obtain access to all their free resources that will help reduce accidents and injuries from these causes of injury and many others.

In addition to the Nebraska Safety Council, NIRMA provides multiple resources to assist your loss prevention efforts. Last month's Safety Shorts article detailed those resources.

Musculoskeletal disorders are caused by many things. Posture and overuse are two common causes. Warm up and stretch before starting activities that are repetitive, static, or prolonged. Take frequent breaks from any sustained posture every 20 - 30 minutes and stretch stiff muscles. Maintain correct posture while sitting by positioning your bottom all the way to the back of your chair. This allows the lumbar support to protect and assist your posture. Also, keep wrists in a neutral position.

Workplace impairment is a growing concern due to the availability of marijuana and the increased abuse of opioids. The National Safety Council recommends educating your workforce on the topic of opioids, training supervisors and employees to spot the signs of drug misuse and impairment and treating substance use disorders as a medical condition that can and should be treated. They also stress the importance of leveraging employee assistance programs to help employees return to work.

Injury prevention is an especially important topic that your safety committee should be addressing at each quarterly meeting. During each meeting, the committee should review any incident that occurred during the previous quarter and develop recommendations to reduce the risk of the incident reoccurring in the future. It is

Loss Prevention and Safety

10 Safety Tips in the Workplace

1. Use tools, equipment and machinery properly
2. Report any unsafe conditions
3. Wear all necessary safety gear
4. Keep your workplace clear from clutter
5. Stay hydrated
6. Practice good posture when sitting or lifting
7. Take regular breaks
8. Be aware of your surroundings
9. Never take shortcuts
10. Remain aware of new safety procedures

Top 7 safety tips for office workers

1. Make sure your desk setup is ergonomic
2. Take regular breaks to get up and move around
3. When it's slippery due to ice or snow, walk like a penguin when entering and leaving your office
4. Use a headset for prolonged or frequent phone use
5. Keep your workplace tidy
6. Don't let electrical cords create a fire risk
7. Know your office emergency procedures

By SFM Mutual Insurance Company

June is National Safety Month! - *continued*

also, a best practice to review any "near misses" that occurred. Property inspections are another method of identifying hazards and reducing the risk of injuries. If your safety committee is interested in learning other ways, they can reduce the risk of injuries I would be happy to come out and meet with you to discuss it further.

Week four focuses on reducing slips, trips, and falls. Every week of National Safety Month should focus on preventing slips, trips, and falls. Falls are consistently one of the top two causes of loss for NIRMA member counties and agencies. From icy sidewalks and parking lot slips during the winter to regular old trip hazards the rest of the year, NIRMA member employees are always at risk of falling and suffering an injury. This is a topic that should be addressed regularly by all employers. Streaming videos, in-person presentations or NIRMA's Online University are options to keep this topic front of mind. Please let me know if you need assistance setting up training for your employees. I can always be reached at chad@nirma.info or 1.800.642.6671.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

By K C Pawling, Road Safety and Loss Prevention Specialist

PPE, does that include shorts?

Well, it's time again for the annual question from road departments. "Are we allowed to wear shorts during the summer months"? This is a question that I was asked frequently as a Highway Superintendent and now I am asked as the NIRMA Road Safety Loss Prevention Specialist. My usual response is, what do your county or department policies say about workwear attire? Generally, counties do not have anything on this topic written into their policies and this is understandable. It seems that the topic has evolved over the last few years.

Generally county road departments are considered in the job category with the construction industry. With all the potential hazards that the construction industry has I would really be hesitant allowing anyone to wear shorts to work. My recommendation regarding shorts is simple - don't wear them to work. The extra layer of protection that pants provide can save us from cuts and scrapes that we are exposed to daily.

This brings me to the topic of all PPE. I want to remind everyone that all employees working in the road right-of-way are required to wear high visibility apparel. The following is taken directly from the latest MUTCD:

All workers, including emergency responders, within the right-of-way who are exposed either to traffic (vehicles using the highway for purposes of travel) or to work vehicles and construction equipment within the TTC zone shall wear high-visibility safety apparel that meets the Performance Class 2 or 3 requirements of the ANSI/ISEA 107-2004 publication entitled "American National Standard for High-Visibility Safety Apparel and Headwear".

**Loss Prevention
Department**

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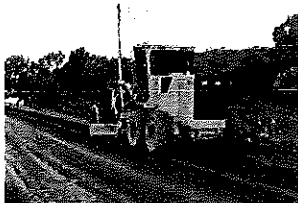
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Safety

is a
team
game
that
requires
everyone's
involvement.



PPE, does that include shorts? *continued*

As I visit counties I hear "yes we have vests" but seldom do I hear that you are wearing them on a regular basis. PPE is used to prevent accidents and injuries. It really does no good hanging on the breakroom chairs or over the backrest of the equipment we are operating. I know that when I first began wearing a safety vest, I didn't feel like I needed it, nothing was going to happen to me. But as I soon found out, not only does the vest make us visible to the motoring public that we deal with daily, but it also helps our co-workers see us better on the construction site. I had a co-worker that always seemed to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. MANY times, I was sure glad that he was wearing the hi-vis vest because I could see him better while I was running equipment.

Are your departments requiring the use of the appropriate PPE, to include but not limited to gloves, safety toe footwear, face shields, safety glasses and chainsaw chaps? We don't put PPE on every morning with the anticipation of getting struck, cut, or scratched but I'm sure we are all thankful we had it on when something did happen. I would also like to say that I'm sure your family is happy that you had it on too.

Safety is something we take for granted living in the United States, but it is something we need to think about every day. We have all heard that safety is a culture, and it is, it should be the number one focus of our jobs, above all else- safety first. I'm sure many of you have some examples of near-hits that come to mind, and you're probably thankful that they were near-hits and no injuries.

All counties should review their department policies concerning PPE and update them as needed. The world is not getting any safer. Please, let's take the time and make sure everyone makes it home every night. Be safe!

If you have any questions, comments, concerns, or training requests please let me know. I can be reached at kcpawling@nirma.info or (cell) 402-310-4417.

**Get Ready for the NIRMA Conference
at its New Kearney Venue**

This year's annual Self Defense for County Officials Conference on October 20-21 is scheduled to take place at the new Younes Conference Center North in Kearney adjacent to the new Crowne Plaza Hotel.

Mark your calendars and plan to attend!