

# NIRMA's

Loss Prevention and  
Safety Department  
Monthly Newsletter

# NIRMA's Safety Shorts

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## October Is National Cyber Security Awareness Month

Under the overarching theme of **'Own IT. Secure IT. Protect IT.'**, the 16<sup>th</sup> annual National Cybersecurity Awareness Month (NCSAM) is focused on encouraging personal accountability and proactive behavior in security best practices, digital privacy and draw attention to careers in cybersecurity.



### GENERAL SAFETY

**By Chad Engle, Loss Prevention and Safety Specialist**

### Safety Short October 2019

October is here and with that comes NIRMA's annual Self Defense for County Officials conference, MSHA Annual Refresher Training (ART) for counties with gravel pits and the last month to submit your ASSIST Grant Program applications.

We just held our final planning meeting for this year's annual Self Defense for County Officials conference. This year, it will be held at the Holthus Convention Center in York, NE due to the flooding in Kearney. But do not fear, it will be as educational as ever! We have an excellent group of presenters lined up and the Holthus Convention Center has everything we need to put on an incredible conference for our members. I hope to see you there.

As I said, October is always a busy month. Once we wrap up the conference, Tim Baxter and I will be providing Annual Refresher Training to those counties that operate gravel pits that are subject to the Mine Safety and Health Administration. Don't worry, if you don't know what any of that means, it probably doesn't apply to you.

The other project that keeps me busy in October is the NIRMA ASSIST Grant Program. It always surprises me when members say that they were unaware of the program's existence, so I thought I'd give it one more plug before the November 1<sup>st</sup> application deadline. All applications must be received, not post marked, but received by close of business on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. Over the 11 years that we have been offering this program we have only had a few that didn't make the deadline, but just to be safe, please don't wait until the last minute to submit your application. There is no limit to the number of applications that can be submitted per county, so don't hesitate to submit an application just because someone else in your county already has. The submission deadline is also the deadline for reimbursement requests from the previous year's program. If you have not requested reimbursement from the last ASISST Grant Program you have until November 1, 2019 to do so as well. Approved applications that do not seek reimbursement will not be considered for payment after November 1, 2019. If you have any questions regarding the NIRMA ASSIST Grant Program application or reimbursement process, please give me a call at 1.800.642.6671.



## **HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

**By Tim Baxter, Road Safety and Loss Prevention Specialist**

### **Bridge Inspection Safety**

Bridge inspectors are at some type of a risk every time they inspect bridges. Some, but not all, of the hazards associated with bridge inspections are slips, trips and falls due to walking on slippery earth banks, tripping on brush and debris under bridges, and falling off bridges, yes, it has happened.

Bridge inspections should never be performed by one individual for safety reasons, especially when inspecting high elevation, large bridges with long spans, canal bridges where deep water is present or bridges where steep banks require foot travel and slips/falls could occur.

Keep your office informed as to where you are performing bridge inspections in case of an emergency.

Ensure the proper sized first aid kit is in the vehicle when inspecting bridges.

Always wear the proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including but not limited to hardhats, safety glasses, safety vests, safety harness/lanyard, gloves, slip resistance boots/shoes, long pants, and life jackets when working around water, etc.

Inspect ladders prior to use and remember to use the proper Type I rated ladder during inspections. Ensure footing for ladders is stable so ladders won't slip or sink into unstable footing.

Ensure the proper traffic control signing is used, especially on busy roads, as traffic pays little attention to employees on the road, even when signs are used.

Long sleeved shirts should be worn to prevent cuts to the arms as well as help prevent tick infestation. Always check your body at the end of the day for ticks as Lyme and other tick-transferred disease can be contracted from ticks. Also, watch for poisonous spiders while inspecting bridges as unfortunately black widow and brown recluse spiders reside in Nebraska.

The wearing of long pants will help ward off poison ivy, poison oak and other poisonous plants as well as prevent your legs from scratches and cuts when walking through brush around and under bridges. Rattlesnakes and other poisonous snakes are present in the state and it is advised to wear snake leggings to reduce the chance of being bitten. A number of close calls have occurred in the past, so be careful.

One hazard that is rarely discussed is falling through ice while inspecting bridges. A large number of counties perform bridge inspections after a heavy freeze when weeds have died and hopefully snakes have crawled away for the winter. Once cold weather sets in, standing water freezes under bridges and inspectors sometimes walk across the ice to inspect the underside of the bridge. Be very careful when doing this as the ice could break and the inspector could fall in, not necessarily drowning, although that possibility is always present, but getting very cold with wet clothes possibly allowing hypothermia to set in.

Loss Prevention

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This article addresses just some of the safety issues that need to be discussed; other safety information is in your Bridge Inspection Manual which is available when the required bridge inspection training is acquired.  
Be Safe.

Please contact Tim at 402-310-4417 or [tim@nirma.info](mailto:tim@nirma.info) with any questions.





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Wednesday,

October 2nd

from

3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Those arriving early

may pick up their

conference

materials in

advance at the

registration desk.



## LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CORRECTIONS

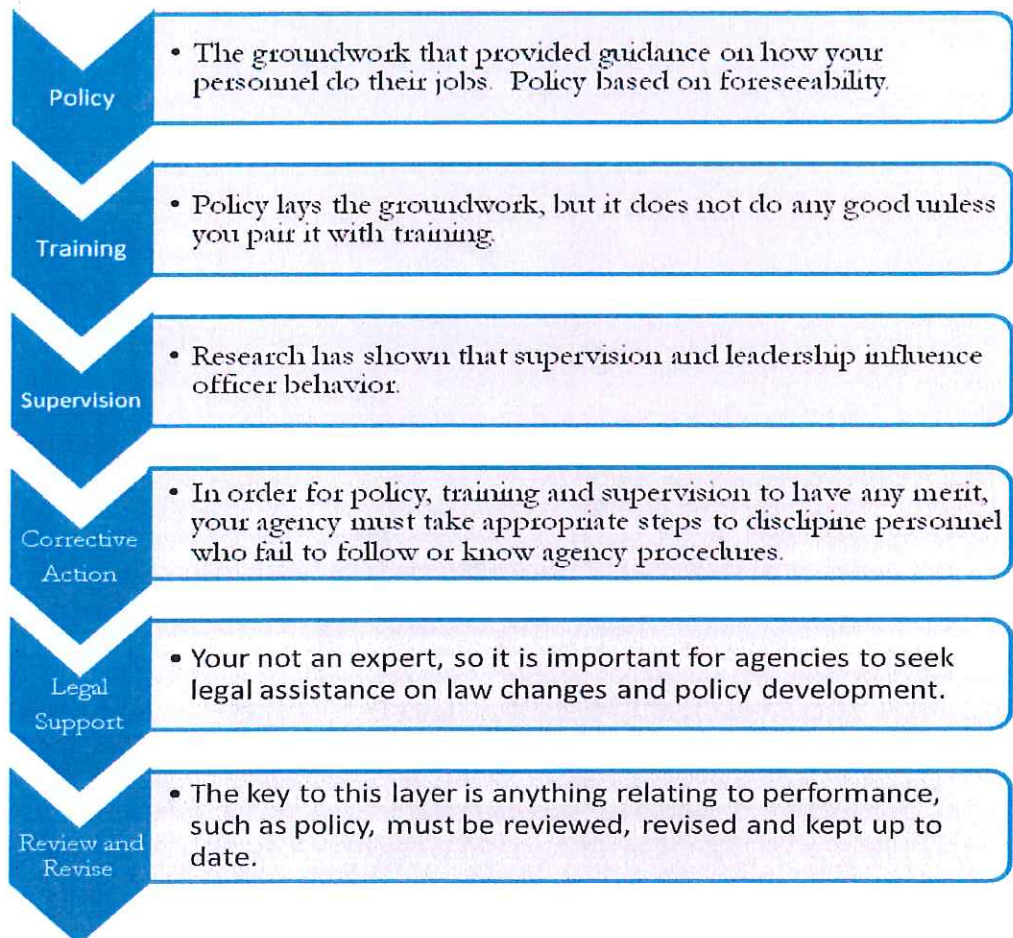
By Terry Baxter, Law Enforcement and Safety Specialist

### Six Levels to Avoid Liability

Attorney G. Patrick Gallagher, a well-known author for many publications addressing law enforcement liability, has identified in one of his books law enforcement risk management. In this book Attorney Gallagher compares six-layers of liability protection to be very similar to officers wearing a bullet proof vest. Attorney Gallagher indicates that by using the six layers of protection as you would a bullet proof vest, you may eliminate or have the potential to minimize a threat to the officer, administration and/or the county.

Like a bullet proof vest, the six levels of protection work together to protect your agency. According to Attorney Gallagher's writing, he indicates you sometimes may develop one or two weak layers, but the more protection you have the stronger the six-layers will be as the layers work together and do not function very well on their own.

I have attended, as you, many training sessions throughout my career and the six layers have never changed.







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For more  
information or  
to request  
training  
involving  
law enforcement  
and/or  
corrections  
operations.,  
contact Terry at:  
[terry@nirma.info](mailto:terry@nirma.info)  
or  
402-686-9332.



## **LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CORRECTIONS**

**By Terry Baxter, Law Enforcement and Safety Specialist**

### **Six Levels to Avoid Liability** *continued*

When you look at the layers of protection, most often the strongest is policy. Agencies have developed a guidance system that outlines what officers should do but the weakness link to the layers is most often the training and making sure policy is kept up to date.

Personnel must know agency policies, and the only way this is accomplished is through actual policy training. Prevent foreseeable events from happening...address agency policy, training, provide supervision, take corrective action when necessary, include legal support and finally ensure your agency policies are up to date and current.

NIRMA offers you a wide variety of model policies and procedures. These are constantly being reviewed and revised when necessary.

We can provide you assistance in policy development, policy training and legal advice through our employment toll free line relating to human resource issues. The number is (866.896.6423) toll free or (402) 898 7423. An experienced labor law attorney will provide you with the correct answers.

Be proactive... not reactive when it comes to protection!



**Join NIRMA October 3-4 At the Holthus Convention Center**

More than 18 hours of educational and information-packed sessions will be Featured again this year, with a broad range of topics addressed.