

# NIRMA's

Loss Prevention and Safety Department  
Monthly Newsletter



# NIRMA's Safety Shorts

General Safety, Highway & Law Enforcement

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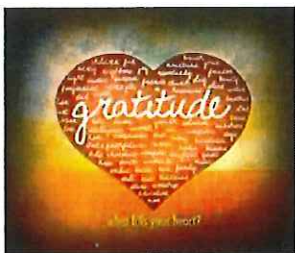
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## November Is National Gratitude Month

Gratitude is more than simply saying "thank you." Gratitude's amazing powers have the ability to shift us from focusing on the negative to appreciating what is positive in our lives. Practicing daily gratitude gives us a deeper connection to ourselves, the world around us.



### HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

By Tim Baxter, Road Safety and Loss Prevention Specialist

#### Personnel Lifting Devices

To perform certain road department tasks, such as removing or trimming trees, personnel must be lifted or elevated. It is essential to always remember that this is very dangerous work, even when the proper personal protective and employee lift equipment is used. It should go without saying that the risks of employee injuries and potential liability skyrocket when a management employee directs or allows the performance of elevated work in a manner that is unsafe.

The ONLY safe way to lift personnel is using equipment and a personnel cage specifically designed for lifting personnel. The operator's manual must state the machine is approved for lifting personnel. Front end loaders are generally not approved for such use.

If the loader operator's manual states, "never use the work tool for a work platform," then do not use it to elevate personnel. If the operator's manual is silent on whether it can be used for this purpose, the employer must determine if a piece of equipment is designed for lifting or elevating personnel. The employer would have to either find out from the manufacturer that the equipment is designed for this use, or, when that information is unavailable, consult with a certified professional engineer to ensure that the equipment was so designed.

Following equipment directions and manufacturer's limitations helps avoid injured workers, down time, and equipment damaged through misuse. At the end of the day, that is just good management.

While OSHA regulations do not technically apply to county workers, NIRMA recommends meeting or exceeding its standards. OSHA does not allow front end loaders to be used as personnel lifts. As OSHA Standard 1926.451(c)(2)(iv) states, "Front end loaders and similar pieces of equipment shall not be used to support scaffold platforms unless they have been specifically designed by the manufacturer for such use."

Serious injuries to employees have occurred when elevated tasks are performed in an unsafe manner. The statement, "WE'VE ALWAYS DONE IT THIS WAY," when used as a justification for unsafe practices, should be put to rest forever. Those in supervisory positions must think about the potential consequences before instructing employees to do something dangerous. And all of us must avoid turning a blind eye when they see unsafe practices occurring. Obtain quotes from professional tree services to perform dangerous work such as large tree removal and trimming high tree limbs, if your team cannot do so safely. Utilizing a contractor may not be as expensive as you think, especially when compared to the prospect of a serious injury to one of your employees.



Loss Prevention  
and  
Safety Department

**5 times  
as many police  
have died of  
COVID than  
gunfire in  
Pandemic**

**FATALITY  
STATISTICS**

**YEAR 2021**

Total	393	33%	↑
Gunfire	52	21%	↑
Auto	53	23%	↑
Other	288	38%	↑



**Personnel Lifting Devices** *continued*

Never try to force or threaten employees to perform unsafe work. Plan ahead to ensure that employees performing elevated work are staying safe, and get familiar with the limitations of your equipment when it comes to this type of dangerous work. This is a critical part of avoiding injuries and potential claims. Please contact me with any questions. Be Safe.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CORRECTIONS**

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

**The Importance of Planning**

Three dead, including shooter, after disgruntled former employee opens fire at Superior, Nebraska elevator was the headlines after an active shooter event occurred in Nuckolls County on October 21, 2021. Preliminary investigation indicated an employee of Agrex Elevator had been terminated earlier that day. Later the fired employee returned and began shooting at employees, two employees were killed before another employee retrieved a shotgun and returned fire killing the shooter.

As in many events such as these, local residents identify their communities as quiet, rural, agricultural where everyone knows everyone, the common refrain is "you don't expect this happen to here", but workplace violence events happen everywhere, we are simply not use to them occurring in our own backyards and when they do we are surprised.

Though I have written many articles about this, I thought this would be a good opportunity to review this topic once again, especially after the recent event in Nuckolls County. I have stressed the importance of emergency planning as it relates to workplace violence and active shooter situations, these types of events happen way to often and revenge seems to the driving force.

There are a number of "red flags" or warning signs related to a person who commits an act(s) of workplace violence which may include:

Threats- direct or veiled	Unreasonable -never happy, overreacts to feedback or criticism. Blows everything out of proportion
Intimidation and control-oriented force their opinions on others	Paranoid-everyone is out to get them
Angry, argumentative, hate issues	Irresponsible-always someone else is to blame
Antisocial Behaviors- fascination with violence	Vindictive-verbalizes hope for something bad to happen
Bizarre Behavior-behaves in an unusual manner	Desperation-backed in a corner with no other options
Obsessive Behaviors-jealous	Substance Abuse-demonstrating signs of alcohol or drug
Chronic Depression-loss interest in everything	

Loss Prevention  
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We're on the Web

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## **The Importance of Planning** *continued*

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) defines workplace violence as the act or threat of violence, ranging from verbal abuse to physical harm, directed toward people in the workplace.

How can you deter workplace violence issues? You have to make your workplace a hard target, in other words by training employees on how to recognize, report and respond to a workplace violent event.

Many workplace violence events start small, but can quickly escalate, the disturbing fact is most risk factors can be identified, limiting or preventing tragedies in the workplace from occurring. Counties should be assessing their worksites and enhancing vulnerable concerns in hopes of preventing violent events from occurring.

NIRMA Loss Prevention offers a variety of onsite trainings as well as onsite workplace security assessments that can assist with preparing county personnel while offering recommendations on how to enhance security and recognize potential issues before they reach tragic portions.

No tolerance workplace violence policies are a must, but a critical element for workplace violence prevention is continuous training of personnel. Maintaining a consistent training schedule as it relates to workplace violence and workplace violence policies will go a long way in protecting and eliminating workplace violent events from occurring at your workplace.

### **GENERAL SAFETY**

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

#### **I Have a Question**

I've been watching Monday Night Football with a group of people at a good friend's house since around 1994. Roughly 27 years, missed only a handful of times, mainly due to travel for work. Last night while standing around the fire pit my friend, the host, was talking about a book he is working on called "The Truth". One of the *truths* that he swears by is that when people ask for advice, they don't really want your advice, they want you to agree with them. Over the years I have found this one to be pretty accurate. Another of his *truths* goes something like this, "If you want to make a friend angry, lie to them, if you want to lose them forever, tell them the truth."

As we're discussing other ideas he is covering in the book, he asks, "Why do people look up to the folks that come to save them when they've made a mistake, but think that the person who was trying to keep them from making the mistake is an idiot?" We talked about firefighters and law enforcement that show up after a car accident and how well thought of they are, and for good reason, but how about the parent that told them to slow down, don't tailgate, put down your phone, etc.

That example got my attention. Risk management and loss control focus on prevention, prevention of unsafe conditions and behaviors that can lead to anything from bumps and bruises to serious injuries and fatalities or



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## I Have a Question *continued*

liability claims. NIRMA provides all kinds of resources to help member counties and agencies educate employees to create a safer workplace. Some of our most popular courses are CPR/AED, First Aid and Stop the Bleed. All of these provide attendees with skills that are very important to have in a medical emergency. I have no problems getting member counties and agencies to give me 2 to 4 hours of their employee's time to provide this training. However, the skills provided in this training don't prevent incidents, they are only used to respond to them. Now I'm not saying it isn't worth taking the time to learn these skills, obviously we feel it is worth the time or we wouldn't offer it. What I am saying is that it doesn't prevent anything which caused the need for the first aid, CPR/AED, or Stop the Bleed.

Here's my question: why is that? Why are we willing to take the time to train our folks on how to respond to a medical emergency but not willing to spend the time to teach them how to prevent the incident that caused the injury? Wouldn't it make more sense to spend a few hours on defensive driving, preventing falls or preventing strains/strains? Or even better, we could do both, work on prevention and then what to do if an injury occurs.

Risk management and loss prevention need to be proactive, preventative measures. Let's focus the upcoming year on preventing hazardous conditions so that we can save our employees from the pain and suffering that come from being injured. We owe it to them. As always, you can reach me at [chad@nirma.info](mailto:chad@nirma.info), 800.642.6671 or 402.450.2417. Take care.



SEMINAR SERIES

## 2022 Seminar Dates

The schedule has been set for NIRMA's 2022 Spotlight Seminar Series. The dates and locations are as follows:

- April 13, Civic Center, Gering
- April 14, Haythorn Ranch, Ogallala
- April 15, Holiday Inn, Kearney
- April 20, Champions Club, Lincoln
- April 22, Divots Conference Center, Norfolk