

August Is National Wellness Month

According to the Freestone Medical Center, August is National Wellness Month, and it's a perfect time to focus on taking care of yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally.

There are numerous ways to make small changes, here are a few:

- Increase your water intake.
- Add more fruits and veggies to your meals.
- Monitor your sleep and make adjustments for better sleep habits.
- Join a yoga, walking, or aerobics class.
- Learn to meditate.

These small steps can lead to many more healthy habits in your lifestyle.

GENERAL SAFETY

By Chad Engle, Loss Prevention and Safety Specialist

Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA) Prevention Training

Last month's article covered slip, trip and fall prevention. Slip, trip, and falls are consistently near the top of the leader board for causes of injuries to NIRMA member employees. Another cause of loss that is always near the top is car crashes, or as we like to call them, MVAs.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimated that 42,915 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2021 which was a 10.5% increase from the 38,824 fatalities in 2020. In Nebraska, motor vehicle traffic crashes result in well over two hundred fatalities per year.

How can this be? How we continue to lose that many lives each year is very frustrating, especially given the new safety features that some vehicles are equipped with.

Forward collision prevention:

- anti-lock brakes
- automatic emergency braking
- forward collision warning
- obstacle detection

Another bit of collision prevention technology is adaptive cruise control, Adaptive cruise control automatically speeds up and slows down your vehicle to keep you a set distance relative to the vehicle you are following, it can also provide some braking. Some vehicles have lane assisting technology that warns you when you drive on or cross the line that marks your lane and may help you steer back into your lane.

Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA) Prevention Training - *continued*

The technology vehicles have now is amazing, yet the number of people dying in car crashes is not falling. Unfortunately, we have not developed technology that is able to control our behavior when we are behind the wheel. Sadly, we are our own worst enemy when it comes to driving safely. Changing your behavior requires education and training.

NIRMA offers various training options to keep safe driving "front of mind" for member employees. If it is too difficult to get folks together for in-person training, we offer multiple online options via ***NIRMA's Online University***. NIRMA also offers thirty plus videos covering safe driving on our ***Streaming Videos on Demand***. Through a partnership with CRL and Safety National we also have three online interactive driving courses available to our members. If none of those options fit, we can also provide the National Safety Council's Defensive Driving Course 4 hour, also known as DDC 4, in-person.

The training options outlined above are all available to NIRMA members at no cost. If you are looking for a training topic that will address a hazard that nearly all employees face, driving safety is the easy choice. Most of us drive daily, it is the most dangerous activity we engage in. Please take advantage of one or more of the resources provided through your membership with NIRMA and do your part to reduce the risk your employees face on the road every day.

To set up training you can always reach me at chad@nirma.info or 1.800.642.6671.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

By K C Pawling, Road Safety and Loss Prevention Specialist

Article reprinted from August 2021

School Bus Safety

August is National Back to School Month. When schools open the end of August, school buses will be running again, and extra care should be taken when county road department employees are traveling county roads. Instruct your employees to be extra careful at intersections while driving trucks, blading roads and during other road maintenance and construction activities.

Now is a good time to contact school representatives and ask for school bus route maps so those routes can be inspected for signing and road conditions, inspect intersections where weeds and brush may be hindering sight of oncoming traffic and remove those hazards. Minimum line of sight height at intersections is three and a half feet (3.5 ft.) above the surface of the road, so ensure sight distance problems are removed below that height or better yet, removed altogether. School bus drivers' line of sight height is much higher than the standard 3.5 ft. so ensure tree limbs hanging over county rights-of-way, looking both ways from intersections, are trimmed a minimum 8 ft. above road surface to ensure good visibility of oncoming traffic for those school bus drivers. Remember to spray brush once it has been cut to prevent regrowth. Road sign minimum installation height is five feet from edge of road to bottom of sign, four feet minimum for advisory speed plaques. Ensure brush, trees and weeds do not block visibility of any and all road signs.

Ensure "School Bus Stop Ahead" signs, "S3-1" symbol or "S3-1a" legend signs are in good condition, including but not limited to the proper size of 36", height, color, retroreflectivity, advanced placement of 500 feet, if stop location visibility is impaired, according to the 2019 Nebraska State Supplement to the MUTCD, etc. The 2009 MUTCD requires all school signs to be fluorescent yellow green. Visit with school officials as to any sight distance or signing concerns their bus drivers may have and work to correct those concerns. It's critical to maintain good

School Bus Safety - *continued*

public relations with your county's schools whose buses travel your roads nearly every day during the week. Remember, "School Bus Stop Ahead" signs, S3-1 or S3-1a, must be the fluorescent yellow-green sign, yellow school signs can no longer be used. This rule has been in effect since the federal 2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices was adopted.

Corn at this time of year is very tall and presents sight distance problems. Counties have little control over this problem unless the corn is planted in county rights-of-way. Work with your county attorney to follow procedures under Neb. Rev. Stat. §39-301 to give notice to the landowner/tenant, and then remove any corn or other sight obstruction from the county right-of-way." This not only presents a huge safety issue for school buses full of kids and other motorists, but it is a liability issue as well. The county can be named in a lawsuit due to tall corn planted in county rights-of-way causing sight distance problems, but the farmer can be named as well. The landowner/tenant is responsible for crops on private property.

Have a short safety meeting with all road department and other county employees who drive county roads and remind them that school starts soon, and buses will be running. Young people with school permits will be driving with little experience, as well as parents taking their kids to school, so be extra careful on all roads! There have been far too many school bus accidents in the past so please do your best to inform your employees to travel safely and remove sight distance concerns and to improve signing.

Please contact KC at 402-310-4417 or kcpawling@nirma.info if you have any questions.

If your email addresses are changing to the .gov, please let NIRMA know. Thank you! Send to: pat@nirma.info

Loss Prevention and Safety

PO Box 85210

8040 Eiger Drive

Lincoln, NE 68501-5210

Phone: 402-742-9220

Fax: 402-742-9230

Toll Free: 800-642-6671



NIRMA Self Defense for County Officials Conference
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