

Safety Star: **CITY OF CAIRO**

*See how this southwestern
Georgia city strengthened
its safety culture. - p. 6*

SAFETY THEME

Follow these electrical safety
and EV charging tips. - p. 8

HIGH-VISIBILITY GEAR

Adopt these standards to
protect your workforce. - p. 4

SNEAKY SNAKES

Watch for snakes in unexpected
places this summer. - p. 5

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Cover photo by Emily Perry Davenport.

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not reflect the views of GMA.



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UPCOMING WEBINARS AND TRAINING

Contracts for Local Governments

HALF DAY | 8:30AM-12:30PM June 16 - Cartersville, GA [🔗](#)

May 21 - Tifton, GA [🔗](#)

May 28 - Statesboro, GA [🔗](#)

June 18 - Gainesville, GA [🔗](#)

July 22 - Macon, GA [🔗](#)

General Liability

HALF DAY | 8:30AM-12:30PM Aug. 11 - Macon, GA [🔗](#)

July 14 - Tifton, GA [🔗](#)

July 16 - Statesboro, GA [🔗](#)

Aug. 25 - Gainesville, GA [🔗](#)

Sept. 10 - Cartersville, GA [🔗](#)

PAST WEBINARS ON YOUTUBE

Ashley Wilson Act & First Responders PTSD Program

Oct. 16, 2025 [🔗](#)

Law Enforcement Crisis Communications

Oct. 15, 2025 [🔗](#)

Elected Official Crisis Communications

Oct. 7, 2025 [🔗](#)

Role of the Certified Swimming Pool & Splash Pad Operator

May 22, 2025 [🔗](#)

Responding to a Use of Force Incident

Jan. 24, 2024 [🔗](#)

Georgia Open Records Act

Sep. 21, 2023 [🔗](#)

Reasonable Suspicion-based Drug Testing

Apr. 25, 2023 [🔗](#)

Events subject to change.
Check website for updates.



riskcontrol.gacities.com/lgrms-calendar



A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



By Dennis Watts
Sr. Manager, Loss Control & Prevention Services

Welcome to the May edition of SHARE from GMA Risk Control. SHARE is the primary means to communicate items of Safety and Risk and through the monthly Safety Theme key topics for worker safety. The Safety Theme is a quick way to hold monthly safety meetings, document them, and meet a basic requirement with minimal time and resources involved.

In this issue

May is electrical safety month, so our safety theme focuses on some basics, including some basics on electrical vehicle charging. Many of our members have provided charging stations for the public's benefit and/or have their own electric vehicle fleet.

Vincent Scott reminds us that with summer heat arriving, that also brings out some of our crawly neighbors we need to be aware of.

Weston Cox highlights several impressive initiatives the city of Cairo has implemented to strengthen its safety culture.

Griffin Attaberry discusses visibility high-visibility equipment as one of the most effective and affordable

tools for reducing struck by incidents among public safety personnel working in or near traffic. Sometimes we think we are visible when we might not be.

Training Alert

We have two training events coming up in May and June: Contracts for Local Governments and General Liability. These are key training programs to help you avoid some pitfalls that can cause issues for your local government. These are open to GMA members at no cost. See our training calendar for more information and registration: riskcontrol.gacities.com/lgrms-calendar

The next issue of SHARE will be published on or about July 20, 2026, and directed only to GMA members. Let us know if there is any particular topics you'd like us to cover. And be sure to share your photos and accomplishments! We'd like this newsletter to showcase the good work our members are doing in communities across Georgia.

Be safe.

Dennis

CONTACT: Dennis Watts, dwatts@gacities.com

NOTES *from the* ROAD

BEST PRACTICES FOR SAFE TRAVELS



SEE AND BE SEEN

A leadership approach to reducing roadway risks

By Griffin Attaberry
GMA Law Enforcement Risk Control Consultant

High visibility equipment is one of the most effective and affordable tools for reducing struck by incidents among public safety personnel working in or near traffic.

Whether responding to roadway emergencies, managing incident scenes, or performing routine duties such as traffic control, personnel are frequently exposed to fast moving vehicles and unpredictable driver behavior. High-visibility garments and accessories—designed to capture attention through color contrast and reflective materials—significantly increase the distance at which workers can be detected, giving motorists more time to slow down, change lanes, or take evasive action.

For agencies tasked with protecting their workforce, adopting consistent high-visibility standards is a foundational element of risk control.

Beyond personal protection, high visibility equipment supports broader operational safety by enhancing scene management and public awareness. Clear visibility of personnel allows incident commanders to better track member positioning, coordinate movements, and maintain safe perimeters—particularly in low light, congested, or chaotic environments. This improved situational awareness reduces secondary collisions, a persistent danger at roadway scenes.

For public safety leadership, incorporating high visibility requirements into standard operating procedures ensures that visibility is treated not as an optional practice, but as an operational necessity that protects

personnel and promotes public confidence.

For risk managers, the use of high visibility equipment directly aligns with loss prevention strategies and compliance with nationally recognized standards such as ANSI/ISEA 107. When properly implemented, these garments reduce injury frequency and severity, improve claim outcomes, and limit organizational liability. They also demonstrate an agency's commitment to proactive safety management—an important consideration when applying for grants, pursuing accreditation or undergoing program audits.

Investing in high visibility apparel is not simply a matter of compliance; it is a measurable, evidence-based intervention that safeguards personnel, strengthens operational effectiveness, and supports the long-term resilience of public safety organizations.



WATCH FOR SNAKE BEHAVIOR CHANGES



As snakes seek wetter habitats due to droughts and wildfires, public works employees can follow these tips to reduce the risk of snake-related injuries

By Vincent Scott
GMA Risk Control Consultant

Snakes are common across Georgia, including urban and suburban areas, according to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Division. Public works employees routinely work in environments where snakes may be present, such as roadside ditches, storm drains, wooded rights-of-way, utility easements, parks, and debris piles. Recently, The Augusta Chronicle published an article “How Georgia snakes are adapting to climate change.” Extreme weather events such as intense, prolonged droughts and larger wildfires associated with climate change are forcing snakes and other wildlife to adapt in Georgia.

There are 47 species of snakes in Georgia, only seven of which are venomous, according to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

- Copperhead
- Eastern coral snake
- Eastern diamondback rattlesnake
- Florida cottonmouth
- Northern cottonmouth
- Pigmy rattlesnake
- Timber rattlesnake

Safety Tips for City Employees

- **Before beginning work, inspect the area for potential hiding places** such as tall grass, brush piles, culverts, rock piles, stacked materials and abandoned equipment.
- **Use caution when reaching into areas with limited visibility.** Employees should never place their hands or feet into holes, under debris, or inside pipes without first checking the area.
- **Proper personal protective equipment can help reduce injuries.** Leather work boots, long pants, and gloves provide added protection when working in high vegetation or undeveloped areas.
- **Maintaining clean worksites** by controlling debris and vegetation also helps discourage snakes from inhabiting work zones.

Public works employees can significantly reduce the risk of snake-related injuries through awareness, proper training, safe work practices, and the consistent use of personal protective equipment.

The Partners in Safety Grant Program, exclusively for members of GIRMA and/or WCSIF programs, can offer financial support to help members enhance workplace safety and reduce public liability risks like snakes and other animals by funding training, equipment, and related services. Contact your Risk Control Consultant to assist you in this process.

Sources: [CDC](#) and [The Augusta Chronicle](#)

Photo: Eastern Copperhead, iStock/Ethan Ramirez



Cairo Strengthens Safety Culture

City initiatives highlight Robert Willis' proactive leadership of 49 years



By Weston Cox
GMA Risk Control Consultant

I wanted to share some encouraging updates regarding the city of Cairo's safety program following a recent visit. While speaking with the Safety Coordinator/HR Director, Autumn Waters, she highlighted several impressive initiatives the city has implemented to strengthen its safety culture.

She also shared that an employee, Robert Willis aka "Snake", is retiring after 49 years of service with the city. We discussed his many years of service, his role as safety coordinator, and his proactive approach to creating a safe and healthy work environment for his fellow employees. We honor Mr. Willis' years of service and greatly appreciate his time and efforts towards the city's safety program!

The city has also introduced several employee-focused safety initiatives in recent years, including the following:

A "Days Accident Free" sign that is displayed at City Hall. It highlights the number of days that the city has gone without an accident.

A reward program was established for employees. The program provides a reward for extended accident-free periods, now offering 3 hours of PTO, which has received a lot of positive feedback from employees city wide.

Employee appreciation drawings using donated items from local businesses. This is an excellent incentive for employees who take safety as a priority to participate in these drawings to win excellent prizes.

A "Safety Logo Contest," allowing employees to vote on the City's official safety logo, which is now displayed at City Hall and all city buildings.

"Safety Steward of the Quarter" recognition, including employee recognition and a \$250 award

"Safety Steward of the Year" recognition, including a larger sum award. This was established and implemented this year to reward those who go the extra mile.

It was refreshing to see a city take such proactive steps to prioritize workplace safety, recognize employee contributions, and honor long-term service. We often discuss these types of initiatives during regional trainings, but seeing them successfully implemented was truly encouraging. I wanted to share this information to recognize their efforts and highlight the positive engagement some of our members are demonstrating.

My goal moving forward is to encourage more members to continue strengthening their safety programs the way that the city of Cairo has demonstrated.



Photo: Cairo's new safety logo and "Safety Steward of the Quarter" award.



Take a moment to exercise your brain and relieve stress by solving these fun safety puzzles! Answers on page 10.

WORD SEARCH

change
charger
climate
cords

electric
first
fray
safety

snake
snow
vehicle
water



Photo: Placemaking in Cairo, GA,
by Emily Perry Davenport



May — National Electrical Safety Month | Estimated Time: 10–15 minutes

FACILITATOR NOTE: Read each section aloud. Pause at discussion questions and let the group respond before moving on. No slides or equipment needed.

INDOOR & EXTENSION CORD SAFETY	OUTDOOR & FIELD WORK SAFETY
• Never use extension cords as a permanent wiring solution. • Do not connect two extension cords together — install an outlet instead. • Never run cords under rugs, carpet, or through walls where heat cannot escape. • Match the cord’s rating to the device — check for indoor vs. outdoor labeling. • Inspect cords regularly; replace any cord showing cuts, fraying, or damage. • Unplug small appliances when not in use. • Use outlet covers in areas accessible to children.	• Call 8-1-1 before any digging — have underground utility lines marked at no cost. • Never touch or approach downed power lines — treat them as live at all times. • Watch for overhead lines when using ladders, working on rooftops, or carrying long equipment. • Keep metallic objects, kites, and equipment away from power lines. • Do not overload outdoor cords or allow them to run through standing water or snow. • Verify smoke alarms in facilities monthly; replace batteries annually.

DISCUSSION: Has anyone on this crew seen an extension cord being used in a way that could be a hazard? What did you do — or what would you do — if you spotted it?

VEHICLE CHARGING SAFETY (Fleet & Take-Home Vehicles)

Standard (Level 1) Charging	High-Power (Level 2) Charging	Public & On-Site Chargers
• Plug directly into a rated outlet — no extension cords or multi-plug adapters. • Use only certified charging equipment. • Be aware cables on the ground are a tripping hazard — alert coworkers.	• Requires a dedicated 240-volt circuit — never improvise the connection. • Charger installation must be done by a qualified electrician. • Inspect and maintain equipment; replace worn or damaged components promptly. • Cover outdoor chargers to prevent water damage.	• Inspect the charger before plugging in — look for visible damage, burned marks, or loose parts. • Confirm the plug fits snugly into the vehicle port before walking away. • Stay aware of your surroundings; lock the vehicle if you leave it unattended. • Keep the vehicle’s battery between 20–80% charge for longest service life.

DISCUSSION: If you pulled up to a public charger and noticed the cable casing was cracked or scorched, what would you do? Who would you notify?

⚡ KEY REMINDERS	✓ SIGN-OFF
• Electricity can kill — when in doubt, stop and ask a supervisor. • Report damaged cords, outlets, or charging equipment immediately. • Never defeat a safety device or bypass a ground connection. • Stay current on any vehicle recall notices that affect your fleet unit. • Electrical fires need a Class C extinguisher — know where yours is.	Date: _____ Facilitator: _____ Department / Crew: _____ <i>Attendee signatures on reverse or attached roster.</i> <i>Safety theme created partially using AI</i>

Electric Vehicle Charging Safety Tips

Are you thinking of buying an electric vehicle (EV)? Here are steps you can take to lower your risk of fire and electric shock injury related to charging EVs.

Before buying an EV, have a qualified electrician install:

- A new, dedicated circuit for your EV charging device. Older home wiring may not be suitable for use with EV supply equipment.
- Level II charging devices (if that is your preferred charging method).



Charging EVs:

- Follow manufacturer's guidelines when charging your vehicle. Check with your local dealer if you need additional information.
- Purchase a charging device that is certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory.
- Plug Level I EV chargers directly into an outlet designed to handle the amperage of the charging device. Never use a multiplug adapter or extension cord.
- Install a residual current device with the charging unit. It will turn off the power if a fault is detected and help prevent a fire.
- Place all charging device components out of reach of children when not in use.
- Maintain the components of your charging station according to the manufacturer's maintenance guidelines. Signs of excessive wear may indicate a potential shock hazard. Never use an EV charger with obvious signs of damage.
- Cover the EV charging station outlet to stop water from entering. Check the manufacturer's guidelines to make sure it is safe to charge your EV in wet conditions.

Charging an EV is safe when done with certified equipment. By following these tips, you can lower your risk of having an associated fire or an electric shock injury.

For more information and free resources, visit: usfa.fema.gov.



FEMA



U.S. Fire Administration
Working for a fire-safe America

Click here to
add image.



Photo: Electric vehicle,
iStock/ JetCityImage





Theme Poster

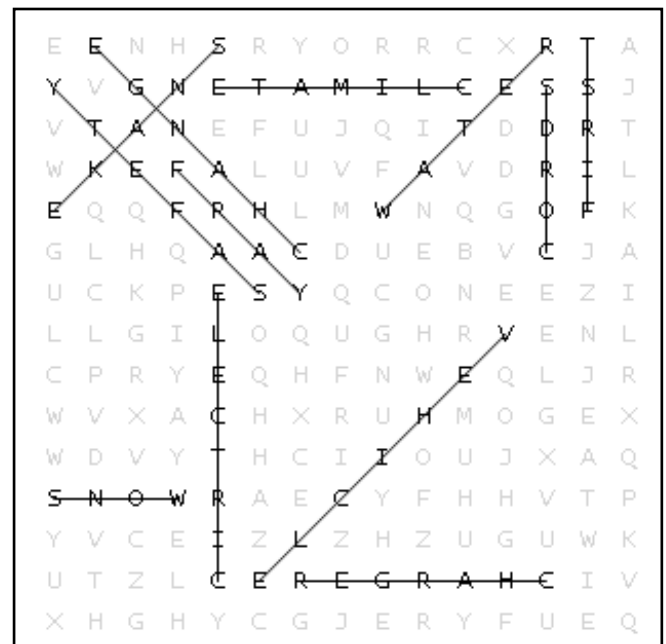
Theme Page

Safety Meeting Agenda

- Assemble participants.
- Hand out copy of theme page.
- Pass around Participant Sign-in Sheet.
- Read theme out loud and discuss aspects of the theme in the department. Give examples. Ask for ideas, etc.
- Discuss accidents/incidents/near misses over the last month.
- Issue safety Self-inspection Checklists for each department inspection team.
- Discuss inspection items noted from last reports and the status of completion of reported items.



WORD SEARCH ANSWER



General Self Inspection Program

Location, Area, or Department: _____ Date: _____

Surveyor: _____

General Evaluation

	Needs Action	Needs Improvement	Good	Very Good
A. Property/Liability				
a. Fire protection	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Housekeeping	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Slip/trip/fall	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Public safety	_____	_____	_____	_____
B. Employee Safety				
a. Safety meetings	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Safety rules	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Work conditions	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Auto/equipment	_____	_____	_____	_____

Property/Liability

	Yes	No
Fire protection	☐	☐
Emergency numbers posted	☐	☐
Fire extinguishers available/serviced	☐	☐
Fire alarm panel showing system is operational; no warning lights.	☐	☐
Automatic sprinkler system control valve locked in open position.	☐	☐
Automatic sprinkler heads clear of storage within three feet.	☐	☐
Flammable, combustible liquids stored in UL-listed containers.	☐	☐
Flammable, combustible liquid containers stored in proper cabinet or container.	☐	☐
Smoking, No Smoking areas designated/marked.	☐	☐
Any cigarette butts noticed in No Smoking areas.	☐	☐

Comments: _____

Housekeeping

Stairwells clear of combustible items.	☐	☐
Furnace, hot water heater, and electrical panel areas clear of combustible items.	☐	☐
Work and public areas are clear of extension cords, boxes, equipment, or other tripping hazards.	☐	☐
Floor surfaces kept clear of oils, other fluids, or water.	☐	☐
Stored items are not leaning or improperly supported; heavy items are not up high.	☐	☐

Comments: _____

Slip/Trip/Fall

Stair treads are in good condition; not worn, damaged or loose.	☐	☐
Handrails for all stairs/steps.	☐	☐
Guardrails for all elevated platforms.	☐	☐
Stair handrails are in good condition; not loose or broken.	☐	☐
Floor surfaces are even, with non-slip wax if applicable.	☐	☐
All rugs are held down or have non-slip backing.	☐	☐
Any holes, pits or depressions are marked with tape, barricades, or guardrails.	☐	☐
Wet floor signs are available and used.	☐	☐

Comments: _____

General Self Inspection Program

Public Safety

Yes No

Public areas kept clear of storage and supplies.	☐	☐
Emergency lighting for public assembly areas in buildings.	☐	☐
Evacuation plans posted for public assembly areas in buildings.	☐	☐
Public areas have necessary warning or directional signs.	☐	☐
Construction work has barriers, covers, and markings.	☐	☐
Street and road signs noted in good condition, clear of obstructions.	☐	☐
Sidewalks smooth and even; no holes, no raised or broken areas.	☐	☐

Comments: _____

Employee Safety

Safety Meetings

Held in the department.	☐	☐
Meetings held ___ monthly ___ quarterly ___ other _____ ; documented	☐	☐
Different topic each time.	☐	☐
Covers department safety rules.	☐	☐

Safety Rules

Rules specific for this department.	☐	☐
Rules are written, posted in the department.	☐	☐
Reviewed with new employees.	☐	☐

Work Conditions

Employees exposed to: ___ Heat ___ Cold ___ Rain/sleet/snow ___ Use of chemicals		
___ Noise ___ Work in confined spaces ___ Work in trenches		
___ Traffic ___ Blood/body fluids ___ Other _____		

Proper personal protective equipment available

Respirators, goggles, face shields, chemical gloves, traffic vests, appropriate clothing

Trench boxes/shoring for trenching, ear plugs/muffs, body armor (law enforcement)

Confined space equipment, harness, air testing equipment, ventilation equipment, tripod

Fire department turn-out gear, blood-borne pathogens kits

Personal protective equipment required to be worn.	☐	☐
Employees trained on proper use.	☐	☐
Equipment properly maintained.	☐	☐
Shop equipment has proper guards to protect from pinch or caught-between type injuries.	☐	☐
Chemicals used in the department.	☐	☐
MSDS sheets available; employees trained on hazards, proper use, proper PPE to use.	☐	☐

Comments: _____

Auto and Equipment

Seat belts provided.	☐	☐
Seat belts required to be used.	☐	☐
Drivers noted wearing seat belts.	☐	☐
All lights working including strobe lights, turn signals.	☐	☐
Tires in good condition, tread, sidewalls.	☐	☐
Glass in good condition; not cracked, broken.	☐	☐
Reflective tape, signs in good condition.	☐	☐
Any periodic, documented, self-inspection of the vehicles/equipment.	☐	☐
Proper guards on mowers, other equipment.	☐	☐

Comments: _____

Safety Meeting Attendance Sign Up Sheet

City/County: _____

Date: _____

Department: _____

Topic: _____

Attendees:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Next meeting scheduled for _____

Safety Coordinator _____

CONTACTS

LET US KNOW HOW WE CAN HELP YOU

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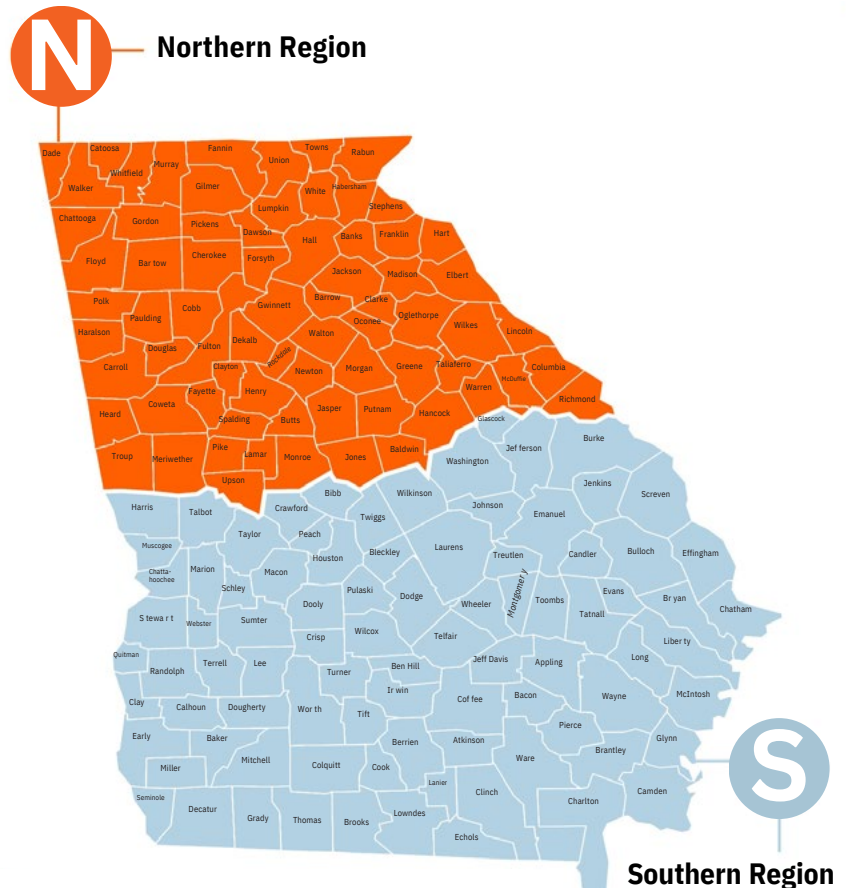
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