

The Significance of a Site Safety Inspection

By law, California employers must provide safe work places for their employees. Failure to do so can not only threaten the life or health of workers, but employers may incur steep penalties for non-compliance and even criminal prosecution. Implementing regular safety inspections using site-specific checklists can help keep workers safe by identifying and correcting hazards in the workplace before they cause an illness or injury.

Keep in mind that hazards may be present in any work process, and can be created by:

- Physical, biological, or chemical factors in the workplace.
- Mishandling of materials and equipment by workers.
- Management practices, such as inadequate training, or providing improper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

When creating your site safety inspection checklist, focus on the following:

- Review your administrative records and postings at your workplace. Check to see that safety programs, procedures, trainings, Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), and other records are up to date and accurate. Employer postings required by Cal/OSHA must be placed where they can be seen by all employees.
- Observe workers to see if they are practicing good housekeeping. Check to see that items and debris are kept off floors and out of walkways, and that stored items are stacked properly on shelving units firmly attached to the wall.
- Inspect floor surfaces to ensure they are clean and free of slip hazards such as dirt, granular substances, equipment parts, water, or oil. Wet surfaces should be covered with non-slip materials and holes in the floor, sidewalk, and carpet should be repaired properly, or covered.
- Test your safety and emergency systems and equipment such as fire alarms and sprinkler systems annually and make sure that your fire extinguishers are charged monthly and recharged annually. Periodically inspect all first aid kits and replenish or replace supplies as needed.
- Examine power cords to determine if they are intact, need repair, or should be replaced. Check the condition of equipment and tools to ensure they are in working order. Take out of service or tag defective equipment.
- Ensure areas under desks and tables are accessible to allow proper ergonomic seating and access in case of an earthquake. Aisles and walkways need 36" clearance in an office and 44" in a shipping area.

Some sites may need checks at every shift and others may need daily, quarterly or annual inspections depending on the workplace and its hazards. *After any inspection, document the observations, identified hazards, and corrective actions taken.*

Finally, encourage workers to make daily site and equipment safety inspections and to report observed hazards

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