

Six Steps to Develop a Property Self-Inspection Program

Conducting ongoing property self-inspections is one of the best ways to identify potential safety, liability and property exposures. Backed up by formal documentation, self-inspections enable routine quality control of buildings and are a key piece of all safety and preventive maintenance programs.

1. Decide who will conduct self-inspections.

Regardless of job title, the inspector should be someone capable of identifying exposures and the appropriate corrective actions. Experience is important: Someone able to identify unsafe conditions in a school may not be qualified to do so in a highway garage or water treatment plant.

2. Determine which buildings need to be inspected and how often.

Although all buildings should be inspected on a quarterly basis, priority should be given to buildings with regular public access, such as city hall, libraries and schools. Buildings with higher exposures, such as chemical storage or heavy equipment use, should be inspected at least monthly.

3. Identify which exposures need to be evaluated.

Consider known high-exposure areas, such as chemical storage closets and boiler rooms, and areas where injuries have been reported by your employees or the public. Seek fire and police department input.

4. Commit to corrective actions.

To create and maintain a safety culture, hazards and exposures must be addressed in a timely manner. Consider your budget, contact safety equipment vendors and secure the support of department leadership. As staff observe that inspections are productive and effective, your safety culture will improve significantly.

5. Review your program and adjust as needed.

Ensure inspections are comprehensive. If inspectors are not finding any issues or hazards, they may need further training on what to look for – or you may need to find different inspectors.

6. Modify the sample checklist below.

Customize the checklist below to fit your buildings and operations.

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✔ Property Self-Inspection Checklist: Administration/City Hall/Library/Community Center

BUILDING: Administration/City Hall/Library/Community Center	DATE:
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ADDRESS:	INSPECTOR:
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POTENTIAL HAZARDS AND EXPOSURES TO CONSIDER	YES	NO	CORRECTIVE ACTION ASSIGNED TO
Parking lot lights and other exterior lights are in working order.			
Building parking lots, walkways, entrances, ADA ramps and stairways are free from slip/trip/fall hazards.			
Proper sand/ice melt has been applied to areas with poor drainage and ice buildup during the winter months.			
Exit doors and paths are unobstructed and clearly marked.			
Aisles/hallways/interior stairs are clear from trip hazards.			
Weather mats are properly secured and in good condition.			
Fire extinguishers are inspected and accessible.			
Dumpsters/trash cans are safely located away from buildings.			
Space heaters are approved non-exposed-element units with automatic shut-offs.			
Boiler certificates are posted.			
Boiler rooms are free from flammable storage.			
All chemicals are properly stored, contained and labeled.			
Chemical storage areas are ventilated.			
Incompatible chemicals are separated.			
Tree limbs, brush and overgrowth are cut away from the building.			
Electrical cords and power strips at desks are not overloaded.			
Smoking is restricted to designated safe areas.			
Sprinkler systems are inspected.			
Sprinkler heads have at least 18 inches of clearance, including in storage rooms, and no evidence of corrosion.			
All electrical panels (120 volts to 220 volts) have 3 feet of clearance in front of them.			
Proper space is maintained below, above and around life safety equipment.			
Smoke alarms and emergency lighting have been tested and work.			
There are no obvious signs of leaks or water penetration from the roof or plumbing, such as stained ceiling tiles.			
Hand sanitizer stations are not leaking and causing slip/fall hazards.			
Temperature alarms, if needed, are present and working.			
Plants, books and other materials are kept off univents.			
Doors that are not open to the public are properly secured.			
Wall coverings are within acceptable limits as required by the fire department.			



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✔ Property Self-Inspection Checklist: Public Works/Water/Sewer/Fleet Maintenance

BUILDING: Public Works/Water/Sewer/Fleet Maintenance		DATE:	
ADDRESS:		INSPECTOR:	
POTENTIAL HAZARDS AND EXPOSURES TO CONSIDER	YES	NO	CORRECTIVE ACTION ASSIGNED TO
Parking lot lights and other exterior lights are in working order.			
Building parking lots, walkways, entrances, ADA ramps and stairways are free from slip/trip/fall hazards.			
Proper sand/ice melt has been applied to areas with poor drainage and ice buildup during the winter months.			
Exit doors and paths are unobstructed and clearly marked.			
Aisles/hallways/interior stairs are kept clear from trip hazards.			
Weather mats are properly secured and in good condition.			
Fire extinguishers are inspected and accessible.			
Dumpsters/trash cans are safely located away from buildings.			
Boiler certificates are posted.			
Boiler rooms are free from flammable storage.			
Tree limbs, brush and overgrowth are cut away from the building.			
Smoking is restricted to designated safe areas.			
Sprinkler systems are inspected.			
Sprinkler heads have at least 18 inches of clearance, including in storage rooms, and no evidence of corrosion.			
All electrical panels (120 volts to 220 volts) have 3 feet of clearance in front of them.			
Proper space is maintained below, above and around life safety equipment.			
Smoke alarms and emergency lighting have been tested and work.			
There are no obvious signs of leaks or water penetration from the roof or plumbing, such as stained ceiling tiles.			
All chemicals are properly stored, contained and labeled.			
Chemical storage areas are ventilated.			
Incompatible chemicals are separated.			
Extension cords are safely insulated.			
Extension cords are stored in a safe location to avoid causing trip hazards.			
Extension cords are not used as permanent wiring.			
Overhead hoists are in good condition and have been inspected.			
Safe working load is posted on the hoist and beam.			
Compressed gas cylinders are capped, secured and properly labeled.			
Spent oil is stored in proper containment away from fire hazards.			
Garage bay fuel exhaust systems work properly.			
Ladders are in good condition, with no cracks, splits or grease.			



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✔ Property Self-Inspection Checklist: Police Department

BUILDING: Police Department		DATE:		
ADDRESS:		INSPECTOR:		
POTENTIAL HAZARDS AND EXPOSURES TO CONSIDER	YES	NO	CORRECTIVE ACTION ASSIGNED TO	
Parking lot lights and other exterior lights are in working order.				
Parking lots, walkways, entrances, ADA ramps and stairways are free from slip/trip/fall hazards.				
Proper sand/ice melt has been applied to areas with poor drainage and ice buildup during the winter months.				
Exit doors and paths are unobstructed and clearly marked.				
Aisles/hallways/interior stairs are kept clear from trip hazards.				
Weather mats are properly secured and in good condition.				
Fire extinguishers are inspected and accessible.				
Dumpsters/trash cans are safely located away from buildings.				
Space heaters are approved non-exposed-element units with automatic shut-offs.				
Boiler certificates are posted.				
Boiler rooms are free from flammable items.				
All chemicals are properly stored, contained and labeled.				
Chemical storage areas are ventilated.				
Incompatible chemicals are separated.				
Tree limbs, brush and overgrowth are cut away from the building.				
Electrical cords and power strips at desks are not overloaded.				
Smoking is restricted to designated safe areas.				
Sprinkler systems are inspected.				
Sprinkler heads have at least 18 inches of clearance, including in storage rooms, and no evidence of corrosion.				
All electrical panels (120 volts to 220 volts) have 3 feet of clearance in front of them.				
Proper space is maintained below, above and around life safety equipment.				
Smoke alarms and emergency lighting have been tested and work.				
Ammunition storage area is properly secured.				
Sidearm lockers used during bookings or entry into the detention area work properly and locker keys are provided.				
The sally port area is clear from trip hazards or items that could be used as a weapon.				
Detention cells are clean, inspected for use and free from all hazards that could injure a detainee.				
Evidence storage is properly secured, and all access is logged.				
CCTV cameras and video storage work properly.				



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✔ Property Self-Inspection Checklist: Fire Department

BUILDING: Fire Department		DATE:		
ADDRESS:		INSPECTOR:		
POTENTIAL HAZARDS AND EXPOSURES TO CONSIDER	YES	NO	CORRECTIVE ACTION ASSIGNED TO	
Parking lot lights and other exterior lights are in working order.				
Parking lots, walkways, entrances, ADA ramps and stairways are free from slip/trip/fall hazards.				
Proper sand/ice melt has been applied to areas with poor drainage and ice buildup during the winter months.				
Exit doors and paths are unobstructed and clearly marked.				
Aisles/hallways/interior stairs are kept clear from trip hazards.				
Weather mats are properly secured and in good condition.				
Fire extinguishers are inspected and accessible.				
Dumpsters/trash cans are safely located away from buildings.				
Boiler certificates are posted.				
Boiler rooms are free from flammable items.				
Smoking is restricted to designated safe areas.				
Sprinkler systems are inspected.				
Sprinkler heads have at least 18 inches of clearance, including in storage rooms, and no evidence of corrosion.				
Tree limbs, brush and overgrowth are cut away from the building.				
All electrical panels (120 volts to 220 volts) have 3 feet of clearance in front of them.				
Self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBAs) are maintained and properly stored.				
SCBA inspection records are kept.				
Bunker gear is inspected and in good condition.				
Air recharging stations and equipment are maintained.				
Extension cords are safely insulated.				
Extension cords are stored in a safe location to avoid causing a trip hazard.				
Extension cords are not used as permanent wiring.				
Flammable and combustible chemicals are stored in approved containers and cabinets and are properly labeled.				
Compressed gas cylinders are capped, secured and properly labeled.				
Spent oil is stored in proper containment away from fire hazards.				
Garage bay fuel exhaust systems work properly.				
Ladders are in good condition, with no cracks, splits or grease.				



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✔ Property Self-Inspection Checklist: School Department

BUILDING: School Department		DATE:		
ADDRESS:		INSPECTOR:		
POTENTIAL HAZARDS AND EXPOSURES TO CONSIDER	YES	NO	CORRECTIVE ACTION ASSIGNED TO	
Parking lot lights and other exterior lights are working and well lit.				
Parking lots, walkways, entrances, ADA ramps and stairways are free from slip/trip/fall hazards.				
Proper sand/ice melt has been applied to areas with poor drainage and ice buildup during the winter months.				
Exit doors and paths are unobstructed and clearly marked.				
Aisles/hallways/interior stairs are clear of trip hazards.				
Weather mats are properly secured and in good condition.				
Fire extinguishers are inspected and accessible.				
Dumpsters/trash cans are safely located away from buildings.				
Space heaters are approved non-exposed-element units with automatic shut-offs.				
Boiler certificates are posted.				
Boiler rooms are free from flammable items.				
Chemicals are all properly stored, contained, and labeled; and the area is ventilated. Incompatible chemicals are separated.				
Tree limbs, brush and overgrowth are cut away from the building.				
Electrical cords and power strips at desks are not overloaded.				
Playgrounds are inspected for damage and vandalism.				
Sprinkler systems are inspected.				
Sprinkler heads have at least 18 inches of clearance, including in storage rooms, and no evidence of corrosion.				
All electrical panels (120 volts to 220 volts) have 3 feet of clearance in front of them.				
Proper space is maintained below, above and around life safety equipment.				
Smoke alarms and emergency lighting have been tested and are working.				
There are no obvious signs of leaks or water penetration from the roof or plumbing, such as stained ceiling tiles.				
Hand sanitizer stations are not causing slip/fall hazards by leaking.				
Temperature alarms, if needed, are present and working.				
Plants, books and other materials are kept off univents.				
Doors not open to the public are properly secured.				
Wall coverings are within acceptable limits as required by the fire department.				