



# ***Restaurant Manager's Guide to Loss Control***

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## **I. ACCIDENT CAUSES**

All accident causes may be classified in one of two categories, unsafe acts or unsafe conditions. Unsafe acts, an unsafe condition, an accident, are symptoms which indicated that something is wrong in the management system. Examples of unsafe acts and unsafe conditions are given below.

### **Unsafe Conditions**

Defective Stepladder  
Bare Electric Wire  
Hole in the Floor  
Broken Floor Tile  
Water or Grease on the Floor

### **Unsafe Acts**

Employee Horseplay  
Standing on Boxes to Reach High Storage  
Running  
Attempting to Carry Too Much

From these examples, you can see that an unsafe condition is actually a physical defect or poor arrangement of physical conditions. Unsafe acts are actions taken by people with little regard for the safety of themselves or others. Unsafe acts usually result from improper training, lack of attention or poor judgment.

Sometimes the dividing line between unsafe acts and unsafe conditions are not “cut dry”. For example, spilling grease on the floor while cooking is an example of an unsafe act. Letting it stay there creates an unsafe condition and walking through the area in a hurry without noticing it is an unsafe act which would probably lead to an accident.

Usually, as in the above illustration, unsafe acts and unsafe conditions combine to produce an accident. In the above example, the accident could have been prevented by not spilling the grease, by cleaning it up immediately after the spill, or if the employee had been trained to expect slippery floors in the kitchen area and walk cautiously. If the accident chain had been broken at either of its links, no accident would have occurred.

Accident control then depends on finding unsafe conditions and correcting them and on training and motivating employees not to commit unsafe acts. As far as customers are concerned, we must rely almost entirely on removing unsafe conditions. Employees may be selected and trained to work safely, but customer’s actions cannot be entirely controlled.

Your patrons can come from all aspects of the community focused on the services your restaurant provides. As a restaurant manager you will need to help ensure the public a safe place to dine. Therefore, you must be able to make areas accessible to the patrons as inherently safe as possible.

## **II. FINDING AND REMOVING UNSAFE CONDITIONS**

To reduce accidents, unsafe conditions must be removed. This must be a continuing procedure since daily operations will tend to create new ones. One characteristic of restaurants is the competitive nature of the business which makes it necessary to do a large volume of business with small building area and minimum payroll consistent with good customer service. During peak hours, there may not be enough employees on hand to handle spills and other emergencies unless the importance of these situations is stressed. Customers certainly do not like to wait to be served, but far more ill will is developed if these same customers are injured in a preventable accident. The busier the restaurant, the more important it becomes that spills, both in kitchen and dining areas, be corrected at once. It is certainly false economy to operate restaurants with so few employees that accidents occur simply because there aren't enough employees to adequately maintain the premises.

One of the best ways of controlling unsafe conditions is with a formal self-inspection program on a periodic basis. A suggested form for the inspection is included in the material which has been attached to this guide. This self inspection starts on the outer edges of the parking lot and curb service area and goes on through the restaurant including dining room, kitchen, and storage areas. The form provides for marking a specific problem as to needing attention, or needing immediate attention. This is important because once the problem areas are identified; it needs to be decided where to start to resolve the loss producing exposures identified. The most hazardous loss producing exposure identified will need to be the first priority. The following information is designed to serve as a guide to use in filling out the self-inspection forms attached.

## **III. RESTAURANT MANAGER'S SELF INSPECTION EXPLANATION GUIDE**

### **PERIMETER:**

Safety starts before the customers or employees ever enter the parking lot. There are many things around the perimeter or edge of the parking lot which may represent unsafe conditions. If there is a large sign detached from the building at the front edge of the parking lot, the signs should be located in such a way that it will not obscure the view of traffic from cars that are leaving the parking area. While checking the sign's location, also check the general condition. If there are any loose parts or the sign appears to be structurally unsound, that should be noted also. If the signs are lighted, check to make sure that the sign is not located in such a manner as to be confused with traffic signals which might be close to the sign. This is especially true if the sign contains red or green lights. There should be wheel stops and curbing around the perimeter, especially if the perimeter slopes downhill into a hazardous area. Any hazardous device, such as an electrical power transformer, should have a barrier erected around it and such things as gas meters should be properly protected so that vehicles may not bump into them.

### **PARKING LOT & CURB SERVICE AREAS:**

Parking lanes should be marked off to provide an orderly arrangement parked cars. Parking lanes should be wide enough to prevent undue chipping of car doors when opening. The parking lot should have traffic lanes and where these lanes are narrow; the lanes should be marked in one direction only to provide an orderly flow of traffic.

The parking lot should be in good condition with no large holes. There should be adequate slope for drainage to prevent standing water and roof drains should not drain into high traffic areas of the parking lot. This can be an especially severe problem in winter where snow from the building roof melts during the day and is discharged through the drain onto the parking lot and then refreezes during the night, creating a serious traffic hazard the following morning. It can also represent a serious slip and fall hazard. The parking lot should also be checked for presence of trash or broken glass. In curb service areas, trays should be picked up as customers leave and not allowed to accumulate. In the winter, there should be an ice or snow removal program. In the evening, the lighting used should be adequate to allow customers in the parking lot to be seen by approaching cars and to prevent the customers from tripping over small objects which might be around the parking lot. Any light poles or utility poles in the parking lot, along with support posts for curb service equipment, should be painted yellow or have reflective markings. All delivery and service vehicles should be limited to designated areas of the parking lot. Frequently, delivery men will park their vehicles in such a way that they create a traffic hazard, possibly obstructing the view of the street for cars leaving the parking lot. If this is a problem, suitable arrangements should be made to have the vehicles placed elsewhere. Clearances of overhead canopies should be prominently marked.

### **LARGE AND CORNER PARKING LOTS:**

Extremely large parking lots and corner parking lots near busy intersections should have posted speed limits and speed bumps. Speed bumps should be painted yellow to make them show up better. Traffic should be arranged through the parking lot to discourage corner cutting. This fast moving traffic across one corner of the parking lot is an additional unnecessary hazard.

### **SIDEWALKS:**

Sidewalks should be kept in good condition, free of cracks and chips. It doesn't take a very large crack to catch a woman's high heel shoe or cause an elderly person to stumble. Any broken glass or trash on the sidewalk only tends to complicate the problem. Also, any roof drain that drains across the sidewalk may freeze in the winter creating an icy sidewalk and another source of falls. It should also be noted that automobiles have much longer bumpers now. Curb stops should be provided to prevent the sidewalks from being blocked.

### **DOORS:**

Doorways should be kept unobstructed. The doors should be marked "Entrance" and "Exit". The normal convention is for entrance doors to be on the right for those entering and exit doors on the right for those leaving. Adequate lighting is necessary throughout the restaurant but is particularly important at the doorway. There should be emergency lighting. Doorways should be sufficient in number and width to handle the exiting crowd in case of an emergency. A door leading to the outside in the kitchen, where only access is to go through the kitchen is not an exit.

No security precautions such as chains or locks should interfere with free emergency access to the exits. If the occupancy load of the restaurant is 100 or more there should be panic hardware or fire exit hardware. Exits should be prominently marked and arranged to avoid confusion. If you have a door at the rear of the building which could be used as an exit in case of an emergency, it should be kept unobstructed and the pathway to it should be free of storage and congestion. If loose rugs are used around the doorway to clean customer's shoes before they get into the restaurant, all of these rugs should be on the nonskid type and they should be cleaned frequently. Any large glass panels which are located near the doorway and which could be confused for a doorway, should either have safety glazing, a bar across the front about waist high, decals, or signs on the window which will identify it as a window. Any broken, cracked, or damaged glass should be replaced immediately. Broken glass in doors should be replaced only with safety glazing.

## **WAITING, DINING & RESTROOM AREAS:**

The most common causes of restaurant accidents are probably slips, trips or falls. A clean floor cannot be overemphasized. The best way to keep it clean is by emphasizing to employees that they should not walk past any spill or other material on the floor without seeing that it is cleaned up promptly. If floors are not clean, this will be an area that you will need to work on in the future. In addition to being clean, floors need to be in good condition. There should be no irregular surfaces or broken floor tiles. Carpets should be free of tears or wrinkles and all edges should be secured.

From a general maintenance standpoint, sharp edges on counters, tables, and chairs, missing cover plates on electrical receptacles, broken floor tiles, and bent counter moldings should be repaired. Mopping and floor cleaning, except for occasional clean up of spills should be done after the restaurant is closed or when there are no customers in the restaurant. The floor should be mopped with a clean or fresh mixture of solution designed for cleaning floors that dries quickly. Mopping with a dirty greasy solution creates an unsafe condition. This could mean, due to the floor area size being mopped, the cleaning solution may need to be frequently cleaned during the mopping process.

All electrically operated equipment should be properly grounded. All vending machines should be properly secured and located so as not to interfere with the free flow of traffic. Coffee pots in service areas should be located in such a manner that they are not likely to be overturned by children.

Dining areas may have low light levels and this can introduce an additional trip hazard where the dining area has multiple floor levels. Adequate lighting should be provided at step-ups and step-downs as well as an adequate warning. If there are three or more steps, handrails should be provided. All steps should have non-skid nosings. The practice of carpeting steps and not providing nosings can create a very hazardous situation, particularly after the carpet has become worn.

The arrangement of tables and chairs should provide sufficient aisle space to avoid day to day congestion and to provide adequate emergency access to the exits. Tables, chairs and booths should also be stable and structurally sound.

This inspection should include a search for protruding nails, sharp edges, splinters, cracks or loose joints. There should be adequate provisions for seating children. These special seats should be compatible with chairs and booths.

## **FOOD PREPARATION AREA:**

Since many slip, trip and fall accidents can occur in this area, special precautions should be taken to keep floors clean and dry. The injury from falls in this area may be compounded by the fact that employees may be carrying hot or cold foods, pots and pans, utensils, etc.

All electrical equipment should be properly grounded. Only trained employees should be allowed to use powered equipment such as grinders and food slicers. These machines should be properly guarded. A storage rack should be provided for knives. All kitchen knives should be stored in this rack when not in use.

Burns are an inherent exposure in the restaurant business. Burns are slow to heal and frequently result in significant lost time from relatively minor injuries. Employees should be trained how to properly carry trays and hot dishes and to warn other employees when they are near with hot dishes or heavy trays.

Employees should be properly trained and properly equipped to use personal protective equipment (PPE). PPE equipment should include, as applicable; aprons, hot pads, mittens, special footwear, etc. Training should include: proper use of utensils, proper cooking temperatures to avoid splatters, and a warning as to the seriousness of burn injuries.

Other miscellaneous hazards include swinging kitchen doors, chipped glasses, sharp edges on flatware, and walk-in coolers. It is preferable that cooking and serving areas are arranged so that waitresses do not have to enter the kitchen, doors should be arranged so that they swing only one way or be provided with large safety glass windows to prevent collisions at the door. It is important that glasses, dishes, and flatware be inspected regularly to prevent injury to customers and employees and to comply with health department regulations. Walk-in coolers or freezers can present slip and fall hazards due to water and ice on the floors, but the sever accident potential arises from the possibility of someone being locked inside. To prevent this, safety latches should be installed.

#### **STORAGE:**

The entrance to the storage room, as well as the food preparation area, should be posted for **“Employees Only”** and customers should not be permitted in these areas.

An congestion free storage room, clear of excessive trash, provides more room for storage and this should make for a more orderly and safer storage arrangement. Throughout the storage room, stock should be stored in such a manner as to prevent overhead hazards. To summarize, good housekeeping practices need to be implemented and enforced.

### **IV. SUMMARY:**

Once you have made the restaurant inspection using the attached forms and the above information, there could be numerous areas checked. Maintaining a safe restaurant requires constant attention to details. If you haven't made a tour of the restaurant, especially for the express purpose of looking for unsafe condition in some length of time, the first self-inspection should have been very revealing. Many of the unsafe conditions which you have found may be inherent in the building or may require some long term solutions. Many of the problems may be of the constantly occurring type requiring reinspections on a periodic basis to measure how well the training of the employees is proceeding to help prevent these unsafe conditions from reoccurring. A detailed inspection of this type should be done at least once a month and preferably once a week to continually measure the progress in reducing accidents and keeping the loss producing exposures identified under control.

Once the inspection has been completed, it is important that the information gather be used because the inspection alone will not eliminate any unsafe conditions. The checklist should be reviewed and the items which are unsatisfactory should be addressed immediately. Prioritizing, initiating corrective steps, and following up on the unsafe conditions identified are types of actions that will need to be completed to help in reducing accidents.



## RESTAURANT MANAGER'S SELF INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Completed By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: If not applicable, mark as N/A*

<b><u>A. Perimeter</u></b>	<b><u>Satisfactory</u></b>	<b><u>Needs Action</u></b>	<b><u>Action Taken</u></b>	<b><u>Date Completed</u></b>
1. Entrance & Exits Marked	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Location of Signs	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Condition of Signs	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Lighted Signs Arranged to Avoid Confusion with Traffic Signals	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Unobstructed View of Sidewalks or Traffic	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Wheel Stops and Curbing	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b><u>B. Parking Lot &amp; Curb Service Area</u></b>	<b><u>Satisfactory</u></b>	<b><u>Needs Action</u></b>	<b><u>Action Taken</u></b>	<b><u>Date Completed</u></b>
1. Parking Lined Off	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Lined Off Traffic Lanes and Directional Arrow	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Condition of Lot (Holes, Large Cracks, etc.)	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Adequate Drainage	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. No Roof Drainage in High Traffic Areas	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Any Trash or Broken Glass	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Any Ice or Snow	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Adequate Lighting for Night Use	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Poles Painted Yellow as a Warning	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Designated Areas for Delivery and Service Vehicles	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Parking Hazards such as Utility Poles Properly Marked	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Gas Meters, Power Transformers or Fire Hydrants, Property Protected	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. Clearance of Overhead Canopies Marked Prominently	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b><u>C. Large or Corner Parking Lots</u></b>	<b><u>Satisfactory</u></b>	<b><u>Needs Action</u></b>	<b><u>Action Taken</u></b>	<b><u>Date Completed</u></b>
1. Posted Speed Limit	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Speed Bumps (Painted Yellow)	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Traffic Arranged to Discourage Corner Cutting	_____	_____	_____	_____

<b>H. <u>Food Preparation Area (Cont.)</u></b>	<b><u>Satisfactory</u></b>	<b><u>Needs Action</u></b>	<b><u>Action Taken</u></b>	<b><u>Date Completed</u></b>
1. Knives Properly Stored When Not In Use	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Adequate Provision for Handling Hot Utensils	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Adequate Portable Fire Extinguishers, Properly Located & Tagged	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Automatic Extinguishing System Operable Filters Clean	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Cooking Equipment & Hood Free of Excessive Grease	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Food Stocks Dated & Rotated	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. First Aid Supplies Available	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. First Aid Contents Replenished As Used	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Glasses, Dishes, Utensils Inspected Regularly	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Safety Relief Valves in Pressure Cookers Operable	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Proper Traffic Control To & From Kitchen	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Adequate Ventilation for Cooler Compressor	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. No Storage on Top of Coolers	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. No Storage Around Compressor	_____	_____	_____	_____
15. Safety Latches on Walk-in Coolers	_____	_____	_____	_____
16. Ice or Water on Cooler Floors	_____	_____	_____	_____
17. "No Smoking" Signs Posted	_____	_____	_____	_____

<b>I. <u>Storage Areas</u></b>	<b><u>Satisfactory</u></b>	<b><u>Needs Action</u></b>	<b><u>Action Taken</u></b>	<b><u>Date Completed</u></b>
1. No Combustible Storage Around Heaters	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. No Combustible Storage Around Electrical Panels	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Posted "Employees Only"	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Clean and Free of Trash	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Orderly Stock Storage	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Compressors Adequately Ventilated	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. No Combustible Storage on or Around Compressors	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Over Temperature & Overload Protection On Compressor	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Storage Containers Properly Marked & Covered	_____	_____	_____	_____

<b>J. <u>Trash Disposal</u></b>	<b><u>Satisfactory</u></b>	<b><u>Needs Action</u></b>	<b><u>Action Taken</u></b>	<b><u>Date Completed</u></b>
1. Metal Dumpsters with Covers	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Combustible Trash Not Stored Around Building	_____	_____	_____	_____

**COMMENTS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_