

How to Create and Use an Effective Self-Inspection Checklist

Regular self-inspection of your workplace can be an effective way of finding and eliminating hazards before they cause injuries. Having a list of items to spot check will help you catch problems that you think might happen. **Self-inspections at construction sites are required to be conducted weekly and documented in writing.**

Generic checklists are not always effective tools because they are either very long and list items that do not apply to your workplace or are too general and do not remind you to check specific items in your operation. If you have several different departments, each with things that should be checked, you may want to create a checklist for each department. The attached template will get you started in writing a custom checklist(s).

1. Pick out and delete items under each category that do not apply in your workplace.
2. Add new items to the checklist and make existing items more specific to your operation based on your experience with:
 - Causes of past injuries/illness.
 - Previous hazards identified during WISHA compliance or consultation visits
 - Previous hazards noted by your insurance company.
 - Safety issues that you frequently remind or discipline employees about - such as missing guards, unsafe shortcuts in the production process, or personal protective equipment (PPE) that is not worn.
3. You should also add items to routinely check, based on your study of:
 - WISHA standards that cover your operations and equipment.
 - Work rules and PPE requirements in your safety program.
 - Manufacturer's operating instructions and PPE recommendations for tools and equipment.
4. Leave some blank lines so the person using the checklist can note hazardous conditions that do not fit any of the listed items.

Give self-inspection duties to several people - perhaps on a rotating basis, or give each person an area to inspect. Maybe they can even trade areas every so often to let a "fresh pair of eyes" spot hazards that workers may have come to accept as normal. Sharing this responsibility raises hazard awareness of more employees. It also reinforces the idea that a safe workplace is the responsibility of both management and employees.

How often you do self-inspections depends on the nature of the work and potential for hazards to develop. Monthly or quarterly self-inspections may be fine for an office or for assembly work with few machines. Weekly inspections may be necessary for manufacturing with many machines or processes. Each employer on a construction site is required to have an inspection at the beginning of the job and weekly thereafter.

Worksite Inspection Checklist

Instructions: Place a check in the left column of the item if the answer is Yes.

General

√ Items to check	Comments
Is the WISHA Poster posted?	
Is the safety bulletin board up and visible?	
Do employees know who their safety committee representative is?	
Are safety committee/meeting minutes posted or communicated?	
Do employees know how to report unsafe working conditions?	
Are near miss and injury investigations conducted?	
Do employees know where the accident prevention program is and what it says?	
Are first aid kits well marked and accessible by employees at all times?	
Do employees know where and how to get first aid?	
Is each first aid kit complete? (A list of required items inside each kit is helpful)	
Are first aid trained employees cards current?	

Emergency Evacuation & Emergency Exits

TIP: Getting the evacuation map of your office will help you check and document any noted concerns.

√ Items to check	Comments
Are emergency phone numbers posted where they can be seen from telephones?	
Are all exits and paths to/from exits free of obstructions?	
Are exits clearly marked?	
Are exit routes clearly marked and well lit?	
Do emergency lights work?	
Are doors that could be mistaken for a way of exit marked "Not an Exit" or with the name of the room?	
Can all exits be opened from the inside without a key?	
Do emergency alarms work?	
Are evacuation/fire drills conducted regularly?	
Do employees know where to gather?	

Electrical

√	Items to check	Comments
	Are extension cords used only for temporary use?	
	Are power cords free of splices, taps, and damaged insulation?	
	Do all extension cords have ground pins in place?	
	Are live electrical parts on tools, equipment, building wiring, and electrical panels enclosed to prevent contact?	
	Do circuits become overloaded? If so why?	
	Are breaker boxes clear and can they be accessed when needed?	
	Are machines that have moisture (e.g.: refrigerators, air conditioners) or used outdoors or in industrial settings grounded?	
	Do electrical cords and equipment used at wet locations have waterproof covers or seals to keep moisture out?	

Work Stations

√	Items to check	Comments
	Are chairs are in good condition?	
	Are the workstations adjusted for the person?	
	Are materials stored safely?	

Housekeeping

√	Items to check	Comments
	Are toilets and washing facilities clean and stocked with supplies (soap, towels, toilet paper)?	
	Is clean drinking water from a fountain or with individual drinking cups provided?	
	If drinking water is supplied in containers, are they kept clean and closed?	
	Are waste containers kept clean and emptied as needed?	
	Is there effective drainage for wet areas?	
	If you have nonpotable or not-fit-for-drinking water outlets, are they marked as such?	
	Are scrap materials stored safely to prevent tripping, fire or pest hazards?	
	Are spills cleaned up promptly?	

Walking Surfaces/Stairways

√	Items to check	Comments
	Are aisles and passageways kept clear of tripping hazards (cords, pipes, hoses etc.) and at least 28" wide?	
	Is the floor free of holes, projections, or depressions that could cause trips, or let material fall on workers below?	
	Are covers on holes or large openings in floors secure and capable of supporting the maximum load safely?	
	Are floors able to hold the intended load safely?	
	Are guardrails in place on the open sides of all walking surfaces 4' or more above an adjacent surface?	
	Are guardrails 36" – 42" high and capable of withstanding 200 LB of force in any direction against the top rail?	
	Are toeboards to catch debris installed on guardrails where people may work or walk on the surface below?	
	Are stair tread surfaces non-slip, not excessively worn, and free of stored materials?	
	Are walkways protected from or clearly visible to vehicle or forklift traffic?	
	Are employees expected to work from heights? If yes, is fall protection provided?	
	Are guardrails installed on stairways with four or more risers?	
	Is there at least 7' of head room in all aisles and on all stairs?	

Lighting

√	Items to check	Comments
	Is there sufficient lighting in work areas?	
	Are parking areas equipped with sufficient security lighting?	
	Are temporary lights protected from accidental breakage?	

Chemical safety

√	Items to check	Comments
	Is there a written hazard communication program? Is it accessible?	
	Are employees trained in the program, safe use, and hazards of the chemical that they are exposed to?	
	Can an employee find the MSDS for a chemical he/she is using and tell you about the hazards and required PPE?	
	Do all chemical boxes, bottles, bags, tanks, etc. have a label that has the chemical name and appropriate hazard warning?	
	Is the chemical list current?	

Personal Protective Equipment

√ Items to check	Comments
Has a Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) hazard assessment been conducted for the job?	
Are employees trained in the use and care of their PPE?	
Does the furnished PPE fit?	
Is the PPE in good condition?	
Is the PPE appropriate for the job?	
Do employees wear the PPE when required?	
Is documentation of the training available?	
Are safety glasses worn where there is a potential for flying particles or objects?	
Are goggles or face shield worn where there is a danger of corrosive material splash?	
Is safety-toed footwear worn where there is a potential for heavy objects to roll or fall on the feet?	
Is a hard hat worn where there is a potential for being struck by a falling or flying object?	
Are ear plugs or ear muffs available and used in areas where it is necessary to raise your voice to be heard by a co-worker?	
Are gloves, aprons, or shields worn when there is a danger of cuts or chemical contact?	

Portable Ladders

√ Items to check	Comments
Are ladders in good condition with tight joints between steps and rails, no missing parts, or damage?	
Are defective ladders removed from service?	
Are rungs and steps free of grease and oil?	
Do employees have both hands free when they are climbing up the ladder?	
Do employees use a longer ladder rather than use the top step of a stepladder?	
Do employees use a single or extension ladder rather than lean a stepladder against a wall to climb?	
Are ladders raised at least 3' above an upper level if the employee will climb onto that level?	
Are ladders used at a 4 to 1 angle?	
Are employees using non-metallic ladders when working around electrical equipment?	

Sprinkler Systems and Portable Fire Extinguishers

√ Items to check	Comments
Are fire extinguishers charged and mounted in their assigned, labeled locations? (Required monthly)	
Are fire extinguishers that do not pass inspection removed?	
Are defective fire extinguishers replaced?	
Are employees who are expected to use portable fire extinguishers trained?	
Is there a minimum 18" clearance below sprinkler heads?	

Storage

√	Items to check	Comments
	Are materials stored in a way that does not create a hazard (protected from slipping or collapse)?	
	Are storage areas kept free of tripping and fire hazards?	
	Are shelves capable of holding the intended load?	
	Do employees have a safe way to stock and unstock the shelves?	
	Do employees have to get on the shelves to get stock? If yes, are they using fall protection?	
	Are storage racks tightly assembled and free of sagging from overload or damage by vehicle traffic?	
	Is there safe clearance for forklifts through aisles and doorways and to allow placing and picking loads at elevation?	
	Do employees use a safety cage with a forklift when necessary to manually retrieve materials from high shelves?	
	Are hand trucks, carts, or hoists available and used for routine lifting or carrying tasks?	

Forklifts

√	Items to check	Comments
	Are only trained and authorized employees operating forklifts?	
	Do employees inspect the forklift at the beginning of each shift?	
	Are noted deficiencies corrected in a timely manner?	
	Do forklifts have a readable load chart attached?	
	Are all forklift controls labeled and functioning?	
	Are forklift horn, lights, tires, and lifting mechanism in good condition?	
	Are aisleways kept clear and visible?	
	Do operators obey the rules of the road?	
	If they are working from heights, do employees use fall protection?	

Safe Machine Operation

Note: Every piece of machinery has its own procedures for safe operation and its own guarding requirements. Read the manufacturer's owner's manual carefully to understand what it takes to use the machine safely. Not all machines come with the guards that are required by the standards. You will have to add the guards to those machines before an employee can use it safely.

√	Items to check	Comments
	Is the employee trained in the safe use of this machine?	
	Do employees have the required PPE to use while operating the machine?	
	Are machines in good working order?	
	Are moving parts of machines such as belts, pulleys, gears, cutters guarded to prevent accidental contact?	
	Are all the safeguards adjusted properly before use?	
	Are there any electrical hazards?	
	Is the area around the use of this machine clear of any tripping or slipping hazard?	
	Is there sufficient clearance around the machine for safe operations, material handling, and service?	
	Is the power shut-off within easy reach of the operator's work station?	
	Observe the work practice. Is it a safe one?	
	Are employees wearing loose clothing or jewelry that could get caught in the machinery?	
	Do employees get help when they need it?	
	Are employees working next to this machine safe?	
	Does the machine require lockout/tagout procedures?	
	If yes, have they been developed?	
	Is the employee trained in these procedures?	

Portable Tools

√	Items to check	Comments
	Has the employee been trained to use this tool?	
	Are all the safe guards and devices there, working and working correctly?	
	Is the employee wearing PPE?	
	Is the extension cord safe?	
	Is the tool the right tool for the job?	
	Are hand-held tools properly grounded (3-wire cord) or marked as double insulated?	
	Observe the work practice. Is it a safe one?	