

safety bulletin

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Workplace Accident Prevention: Utilizing Checklists

Establishing an injury prevention plan is a crucial part of keeping your practice's employees safe, healthy, and productive. Injuries can affect every aspect of your practice, including employee turnover, productivity, and even your bottom line. Having a safety program in place is an OSHA requirement, but also it helps employees, management, and owners know what hazards exist in the hospital and gives everyone the ability to reduce the risk of exposure to such hazards.

Identifying hazards can sometimes be difficult, and oftentimes we don't see them until an injury has already occurred. **That's why inspection checklists can help keep you and your practice from experiencing injuries.**



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An Important Aspect of Workplace Safety

Checklists boost accountability and promote adherence to specific workplace safety procedures. Additionally, they provide the focus needed to prevent key aspects from being overlooked during an inspection. Routine safety checks can help you identify problems before they become major issues, and they also are a great way to ensure good health and safety conditions for employees, patients, and clients.

Good checklists are “living documents.”

They are meant to be updated as your practice grows and changes. Some hazards might become irrelevant over the years, while new ones might be introduced. For example, a clinic that decides to start offering boarding and day care services would have a new set of hazards. Conversely, a mixed animal practice that elects to focus only on small animals would no longer need to address hazards related to the treatment of large animals. To ensure your checklists remain current, consider reviewing them quarterly.

Types of Inspection Checklists

- ▶ **OSHA regulatory checklists.** OSHA regulations can seem tedious and are easily overlooked. But it's important to maintain OSHA compliance to avoid potential fines for your practice.
- ▶ **Interior hazards.** Interior hazards such as poorly maintained public areas, handling of toxic substances, or the presence of potentially aggressive patients can all lead to injuries. Some of these hazards might easily be overlooked without a checklist.
- ▶ **Exterior hazards.** Exterior hazards such as insufficient lighting, parking lot conditions, and improperly maintained walkways have been known to cause injuries. Including these items on your checklist can ensure safety not just within your clinic, but in the area surrounding it.
- ▶ **New employee orientation.** Having an orientation safety checklist that outlines the hazards a new employee may face while conducting their daily tasks is essential. Knowledge and training can help them stay safe and avoid injury.
- ▶ **Radiology.** Radiographs present specific hazards to employees. It is important to employ appropriate procedures and to inspect all available personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure that it's in good working condition and free from damage.
- ▶ **Ergonomics.** Musculoskeletal disorders are some of the most costly claims a practice may face. Early discovery of ergonomic issues and appropriate training – such as proper lifting and animal handling techniques – can help prevent such claims from escalating.

The AVMA Trust is happy to provide your clinic with samples of all the checklists mentioned above. To access the collection of sample checklists, [please click here](#).

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