

## What is an Inspection?

**An inspection is a visual examination of a facility and/or equipment to identify, report and eliminate or control hazards that could cause accidents before they result in loss. Inspections should target all exposures to, property and members of the public.**

### The Necessity of Inspections

#### **The Need to Reduce Losses**

Every organization needs to operate efficiently and keep operating costs as low as possible. Inspections help reduce the frequency and costs of accidents by identifying, eliminating or controlling hazardous condition and the loss control inadequacies that permitted the conditions to arise.

#### **The Need to Maintain a Safe Environment**

It is the legal and moral responsibility of every organization to maintain safe premises. Inspections are a proven means of preventing losses, and help ensure that the premises are being safely maintained.

#### **Changing Environment = Changing Risks**

Conditions change continually in any environment and so do the resulting hazards. There are two major sources of unsafe conditions. First, there is the normal “wear and tear” – walking surfaces need repair equipment malfunctions and materials corrode. Second, people do things that create hazards – tripping hazards can be caused by poor housekeeping, machinery and tools are abused, guards are removed. Wherever people are, they create hazards.

#### **The Value of Inspections**

Inspection programs provide several significant benefits.

Hazards can be eliminated or controlled before they cause injuries or other losses.

Inspections can prevent damage to materials, equipment and people. They also identify defective or malfunctioning equipment that could adversely affect your ability to deliver needed products or services.

Inspection programs can assess the effectiveness of other loss control functions such as design and arrangement, purchasing, maintenance, housekeeping and employee training.

Inspection data can be helpful in loss investigations.

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Inspection programs provide on-the-job loss control training for involved supervisors and employees.

Inspections demonstrate top management's commitment to loss control as a priority.

Inspections establish supervisor accountability and provide a means for measuring part of the supervisor's loss control performance.

If inspection programs are effectively administered with prompt and appropriate corrective action, they can provide significant financial and humanitarian benefits.

### **Types of Inspections**

The types of inspection that have been found useful for many companies include continuous inspections, general inspections, special inspections, operator inspections, inspections performed as a part of preventative maintenance and motor vehicle inspections. Special inspections include fire equipment, elevator inspections, environmental inspections and other equipment that may fall into a special use category. Operator inspections are normally performed by the operator of the unit or device, but can also be performed on critical parts of stationary equipment.

### **Three factors primarily dictate what type of inspections will be required:**

The premises, equipment, vehicles, processes and materials used.

Past incident/accident history.

OSHA and other regulatory requirements.

### **The Role of Management**

Management has the responsibilities to establish, implement, and maintain inspection programs and then to measure the effectiveness of the inspections and the inspection processes. Specific duties are as follows:

#### **Determine What Types of Inspections Should be Conducted**

Management's first step is to determine the nature and degree of exposures by evaluating the entire premises and operations and determining what types of inspections are necessary to maintain a safe environment.

#### **Develop Inspection Procedures and Forms**

Once a decision is made on the types of inspections, written inspection procedures should be developed for each inspection program. The procedures should include the processes described in the article. Inspection forms must also be developed.

### **Assign a Loss Control Coordinator**

A member of management should be selected to coordinate loss control, at least on a part-time basis, depending upon of the size and exposures of an organization. The loss control coordinator should assist other members of management in monitoring inspection programs. The coordinator should also help, when required, to determine appropriate corrective action. To accomplish this objective, the loss control coordinator should receive specialized training in loss control.

### **Train Personnel**

Training should be provided to all managers and employees who will perform inspections. Training should cover the inspection process, definition and identification of hazards, identification of the types of losses occurring, the completion of forms, the reporting of hazards and the control of hazards. Training should be on going.

### **Hold Managers Accountable**

Duties should be clearly delegated to all managers and involved employees so they have a clear understanding of their role in the inspection process. It is particularly important to clearly communicate responsibility for the elimination and control of Hazards. Many inspection programs fail because there is little or no significant action taken to eliminate or control hazards though inspections are performed and reports are submitted.

### **Monitor Work**

Inspection programs should be monitored on as on going basis by all levels of management, including upper management, to determine that:

The appropriate types of inspections are being conducted.

Scheduled inspections are being completed effectively.

Corrective action is appropriate, effective and prompt.