CHECKLIST

How to Minimize Risk in Your Business

Protect your business from disasters, theft and more with this checklist to identify and minimize risk. Learn more in our eguide, “Prepare and Protect: The small business owner’s guide to identifying and managing risks.”

SECURE YOUR BUSINESS

Parking lots and sidewalks:
☐ Look for trip-and-fall hazards such as uneven pavement, potholes and cracked or crumbling sidewalks.
☐ Install handrails near steps.
☐ Maintain proper drainage in parking lots to avoid puddles that can cause falls.

Building exterior:
☐ Provide adequate lighting to protect against burglary, trips and falls.
☐ Regularly inspect the roof, gutters and exterior cladding for water damage or breaks in the seal.
☐ Make sure signage is well secured.

Building interior:
☐ Conduct regular maintenance of the building.
☐ Quickly mark any wet flooring with a “Wet Floor” sign and mop up spills immediately.

☐ Mark uneven flooring with striped safety tape. Secure doormats or rugs that might cause a fall.

For restaurants and bars:
☐ Have working fire extinguishers easily accessible.
☐ Regularly inspect and maintain the stove hood and ventilation ductwork.
☐ Locate open-flame stoves far away from fryers.
☐ Ensure the automatic extinguishing system is installed and operating over the cooking line.

For contractors:
☐ Regularly inspect and maintain vehicles and equipment.
☐ Know and comply with OSHA requirements.
☐ Ensure workers follow safety protocol and use equipment properly.

THEFT PREVENTION

Secure your property from burglars:
☐ Lock your doors when you leave and make sure they’re secure.
☐ Make sure your business is well-lit, both inside and outside.
☐ Install security cameras at all entrances and exits.
☐ Install an alarm system. Look for one with motion detection that will automatically alert police.
☐ Install fencing, window bars or steel security gates if needed.
☐ Use landscaping to prevent access to windows and reduce opportunities for burglars to hide.

Prevent employee theft:
☐ Conduct pre-employment background checks.

☐ Put controls in place to track inventory and cash flow.
☐ Install security cameras inside the building and at sensitive areas like the cash register.
☐ Limit access to sensitive areas, such as the room with your safe, to employees who need it.

Prevent customer theft:
☐ Install security cameras and convex mirrors to monitor customers in hard-to-see areas.
☐ Install entrance alert sensors that buzz when a customer enters or leaves your store.
☐ Train employees in shoplifting prevention tactics.
☐ Use electronic security tags on valuable items to prevent shoplifting.
☐ Restrict access to items frequently targeted by shoplifters.
### FIRE PREVENTION
- Put someone in charge of fire safety.
- Keep your space free of clutter. Set a regular schedule for cleaning and taking out the trash.
- Train employees to safely store or dispose of hazardous, combustible or flammable materials.
- If you allow smoking outside, create a designated space with smoking receptacles.
- Put your fire extinguisher in a visible place.
- Inspect fire extinguishers and sprinklers once a year.
- Inspect smoke detectors every 10 years; replace smoke detector batteries every six months.
- Invest in a fire alarm system.
- Clearly mark exits.
- Conduct routine fire drills and train employees on the appropriate evacuation routes.

### INJURY PREVENTION
- Educate employees on ergonomics and safely operating machinery and equipment.
- Provide protective clothing, such as gloves, goggles and back braces, if necessary.
- Post signs with safety reminders for employees.
- Inspect and maintain all equipment regularly.
- Keep first-aid kits on hand; inspect and restock them regularly.
- If relevant, ensure employees have safe driving records.

### CYBER CRIME PREVENTION
- Secure your data and back it up in two places (such as an external hard drive and the cloud).
- Identify data vulnerable to a breach, such as customer credit card numbers or addresses.
- Create a data loss prevention (DLP) strategy to protect sensitive information.
- Use DLP software to control what information is shared inside and outside your network.
- Use a Virtual Private Network (VPN) for internet access, especially when off-site.
- Train your employees in cybersecurity best practices.
- Get a cyber insurance policy to cover costs of a data breach or cyber theft.

### MISCELLANEOUS RISK PREVENTION
- Create a plan to respond to reputation risks, such as negative reviews or social media scandals.
- Use non-compete agreements to keep former employees from starting competing businesses.
- Copyright, patent or trademark your proprietary technology, content or logos.
- Regularly check and renew product registrations, insurance policies and support agreements.

### INVOLVE EMPLOYEES IN RISK CONTROL
- Establish daily and weekly checklists for routine safety inspections and maintenance.
- Meet with your team on a regular basis to discuss ways to reduce or eliminate risks.
- Recognize and reward actions and behaviors that reduce risk.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Read more on how to create your risk management plan in “Prepare and Protect: The small business owner's guide to identifying and managing risks.”