

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.”](#)