



# State of New Mexico **Workers' Compensation Administration**

## **Annual Safety Inspections**

The best accident is the one that never happens. Creating the safest possible workplace is an important goal of the workers' compensation system. When accidents happen, you lose the productivity of the injured worker and perhaps that of other employees who are diverted from their work. You incur administrative costs and your insurance premiums can rise. If you have to train replacement employees, you lose the value of the investment you have put into the injured worker. When accidents are prevented, all these costs are avoided and your organization will improve. Safety programs help to reduce the cost of workers' compensation insurance and avoid costly increases in other types of business insurance.

Having a workplace without accidents is not a matter of luck. Most accidents arise from known, identifiable hazards in combination with human error, lack of knowledge or inattention. The way to prevent accidents is to:

- eliminate hazards through safety inspections and prevention; and
- eliminate human error through employee training.

### **Safety inspection requirement**

A safety inspection is a detailed examination of a work environment to identify hazards and make sure that hazards are managed, controlled or eliminated.

The New Mexico workers' compensation law (§52-1-6.2 NMSA) requires all employers to have an annual safety inspection if:

- your workers' compensation insurance premium is \$15,000 or more;
- you are a certified self-insured employer; or
- you pay \$15,000 or more as the member of a self-insured group.

All other employers are encouraged to have an annual safety inspection and to develop their own safety program (see "How to Develop a Safety Program," located at the WCA website: <https://workerscomp.nm.gov>).

This publication explains the safety inspection requirements and the suggested inspection format presented satisfies the Workers' Compensation Administration (WCA) **minimum standard** for conducting a safety inspection under the Rules of the WCA, 11.4.2.9 NMAC.

Employers required to complete an annual safety inspection must submit proof of inspection to the WCA within sixty (60) days of policy issuance or renewal (11.4.2.9 NMAC, change from 30 to 60 days made during the fall 2016 WCA rule-making cycle). Generally, an inspection must include all the employer's facilities in New Mexico and proof of inspection can be achieved by submitting an affidavit to the WCA.

Though the responsibility for reporting is with the business, the insurance carrier may report completed inspections, provided the insurance carrier conducted the inspection.

## **Alternatives to the required annual safety inspection**

Any workplace that is receiving safety inspections from another source, such as OSHA, an industry association or a parent company, does not need additional safety inspections to meet the requirement, provided such safety inspections take place at least once a year and meet the standards set forth in this publication. Complete and send the Affidavit located at the back of this publication to the WCA.

Any employer whose annual workers' compensation insurance premium is less than \$15,000 is strongly recommended to take advantage of a safety inspection program even though they are not required to do so.

## **Who may conduct a safety inspection:**

1. Safety consultants from the WCA can conduct the inspection. The WCA safety consultant can also provide training to an employer's management staff on how to conduct a proper safety inspection. WCA safety consultants are on staff at all offices of the WCA.
2. A senior manager or dedicated safety professional employed by the business. The WCA may be contacted to provide training on how to conduct a proper safety inspection.
3. A third party safety organization or safety professional.
4. A safety professional from the insurance company.

Your insurer or self-insurance program is required to provide you with a safety inspection if you request it (§52-1-6.2 (C) NMSA).

## **The Safety Inspection Process**

The steps of the inspection are:

1. Design the inspection.
2. Conduct the walk-through.
3. Record your findings and corrective action plan.

### **1. DESIGN THE INSPECTION.**

The purpose of your safety inspection is to identify hazards in your workplace so that you can eliminate or control them. Before you conduct the actual inspection, gather basic information that will guide you so you know what to look for.

Look at the accident history of your workplace and obtain inspection checklist(s) for your particular industry. Your accident history will give you a good indication of hazards you should take special precautions to avoid. Make a list of the hazards to check. Note that the “hazard” may involve lack of employee training. You can get this information from any workers’ compensation claims, Notice of Accident Forms and E1’s-First Report of Injury Forms that has been filed. Your insurer or self-insurance program can also provide you with a quarterly report of workers’ compensation claim activity if you request it.

Notice of Accident forms that may have been submitted by your employees give you a history of major and minor accidents and could provide useful information for safety improvement. Compare your Notice of Accident forms with your OSHA Forms 300, 301 and 300A for accuracy (you are required to use these forms if you employ 10 or more workers).

Safety inspection checklists for your industry may be available from many sources, including your insurance carrier, your industry association, the American National Standards Institute, the National Safety Council and others. Your trade publications may be a source for safety checklist ideas. The WCA has safety checklists for several common types of business, available free of charge upon request.

## **2. CONDUCT THE WALK-THROUGH.**

Walk through your facility, making detailed examinations of all items that appear on your final inspection checklist. Take adequate time and be thorough. Many hazards can be corrected during the walk-through itself.

Some items on your checklist may involve employee training. For these items it is best to speak directly with the employees to find out whether they have had the necessary training and whether they have learned what they need to know. However, the statutory inspection requirement may be satisfied by checking records to determine whether the training has taken place.

The walk-through is a good time to remind employees of basic safety information such as the location of first-aid kits, fire alarms and extinguishers and the telephone numbers to call in a health or fire emergency. Make sure current, correct emergency telephone numbers are posted, or correct them on the spot.

## **3. RECORD YOUR FINDINGS AND CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN.**

The product of your walk-through should be a record of items that did not meet safety standards and a statement of the action that you will take to correct the defects. Record your findings on your checklist or make a separate list of action items. BASIC SAFETYCHECKLIST

**PHOTOCOPY THIS CHECKLIST BEFORE USING SO YOU CAN REUSE IT.**

**Company name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Inspection date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Site:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Manager conducting inspection:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Safety professional conducting inspection:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Use this checklist for each area of your workplace. When you locate a hazard, check the "needs work" category and note the work needed and the location of the item for the corrective action plan.*

**Health emergency preparation**

	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>NEEDS WORK</b>
Employees have been trained to respond to health emergencies; or instructions are posted.		
Emergency telephone numbers (911 or separate numbers for fire, ambulance, etc.) are posted.		
First aid supplies and instructions are provided; employees know where to find them.		
First aid supplies are suitable for the type of injuries likely to occur in this workplace.		
Employees have received "right to know" training on hazardous materials and the use of Material Safety Data Sheets. Employees know where the Material Safety Data Sheets are kept and how to use them.		

**Housekeeping**

	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>NEEDS WORK</b>
Work areas are clean and orderly to prevent hidden hazards.		

**Fire emergency preparation**

	GOOD	NEEDS WORK
Fire extinguishers are easily accessible and have been checked and serviced as necessary. Fire extinguishers are the appropriate type for the predominant fire hazards.		
Fire exits are accessible and unlocked from the inside. The path to fire exits is clear, free of obstacles. There is access to two fire exits from every point in the building.		
Emergency escape routes are prominently posted.		
Smoke detectors are installed. Batteries were tested during this inspection.		
Sprinkler systems are tested.		

**Fire prevention**

	GOOD	NEEDS WORK
Flammable materials are safely stored in proper containers away from sources of heat and sparks and clearly labeled.		
Anything that makes flames or sparks is shielded, and the area is clear of trash, papers and other potential fuel.		

**Floors, aisles, stairs and entryways**

	GOOD	NEEDS WORK
Floors provide good traction and are free of cracks, bumps and other hazards that could cause trips or falls.		
Cleanup materials are provided for water, grease or other materials that could create slippery conditions. Employees are trained to clean up spills promptly.		
Aisles are clear, free of tripping hazards and well lighted.		
Stairs are in good condition with no loose steps, provided with handrails and well lighted. Areas under stairways are clear and not used for storage.		

**Ladders**

	GOOD	NEEDS WORK
Ladders are provided where needed, are of standard construction and in good condition.		

**Storage**

	GOOD	NEEDS WORK
Stored materials, products and supplies are set in stable, balanced piles, to a reachable height. Sturdy stepladders are provided if necessary.		

**Machines and equipment**

	GOOD	NEEDS WORK
Machines and equipment are in safe operating condition. Safety guards are in place and in use.		
Appropriate tools are provided.		

Employees are trained to use machines only for the tasks for which they are suitable.		
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### Hand and power tools

	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>NEEDS WORK</b>
Tools are in good condition. Wires, cords and connections are in good condition.		
Employees are trained to use tools only for jobs for which they are suitable.		

### Electrical

	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>NEEDS WORK</b>
Grounds are provided on power tools and extension cords.		
Equipment is in good operating condition.		
Wires are in good condition and free of fraying. Wires and extension cords are not routed over metal objects or through doorways or window openings.		
Circuits are not loaded beyond their capacity.		

### Lighting

	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>NEEDS WORK</b>
Light is sufficient for each job.		
Emergency lighting for power outages is installed.		
Emergency lights were tested during this inspection.		

### Personal protective equipment

	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>NEEDS WORK</b>
Hard hats, gloves, boots, aprons, ear protectors, masks and other protective equipment are provided where appropriate and are in use.		
Goggles or other eye protection is provided and used for any operation that involves flying particles.		
Employees are trained in the use of protective equipment.		

### Back injury prevention

	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>NEEDS WORK</b>
All employees who do heavy lifting and moving are trained in back injury prevention and proper use of back support belts.		
Employees who do heavy lifting and moving stretch and warm up to prevent sudden exertion of cold muscles.		
Back support belts are used only to lift.		
All employees who are not physically capable of heavy lifting and moving are instructed to leave these tasks to designated, trained employees.		

### Repetitive motion injury prevention

	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>NEEDS WORK</b>
All employees who repeat the same movements throughout the day take		

stretch and exercise breaks several times a day or when appropriate.		
When possible, employees are given varied assignments so they can avoid excessive stress on particular body parts while remaining productive.		

#### **New employee training**

	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>NEEDS WORK</b>
New employees have been given basic safety training as part of employee orientation.		

#### **Automobiles and motor vehicles**

	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>NEEDS WORK</b>
Each motor vehicle is provided with a checklist for routine safety checks by employees assigned to this task and a log for recording routine safety checks by employees.		
Each automobile and other motor vehicle is provided with a service and maintenance log for recording regular professional servicing, maintenance and repairs.		
Responsibility for regular inspection and servicing of company-owned automobiles has been assigned to specific employees.		
Employees are trained to report any safety or mechanical problems to the proper person.		
Every vehicle receives regular professional servicing every 3,000 miles, or more often if appropriate.		
Vehicles used in long-distance trips are provided with safety equipment, including flashlight, flares, tools and first aid kit.		
Spare tire, jack and lug wrench are in place and spare tire is properly inflated.		

#### **Crime/violence prevention**

	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>NEEDS WORK</b>
Outdoor lighting is adequate, including parking lot; lights are in working order (observed at night).		
Telephones are accessible to all work stations.		
Building space is arranged so visitors can be observed.		
Building space is arranged so employees will not be trapped in closed spaces.		
Security guards, buddy system, or other method is in place for late-night working hours.		
Employees have received training on response to threats of violence.		
Employees have received training in handling cash, both in the workplace and in transit.		
Discreet storage is provided for employee's purses and other personal items.		

**USE A SEPARATE PAGE FOR INSPECTOR'S COMMENTS.**



State of New Mexico  
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Administration**

Visit our website or contact us to learn more about workers' compensation services, programs, and to find the WCA field office nearest you.



Email: [Safety.Outreach@wca.nm.gov](mailto:Safety.Outreach@wca.nm.gov)

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[www.workerscomp.nm.gov](http://www.workerscomp.nm.gov)