

Stairways and Walkways

Line of Business: General Liability

Risk Control Strategy/Key Issues: To establish a procedure to ensure proper maintenance, design, and lighting of stairways and walkways to reduce fall hazards.

Suggested Program Elements:

1. Policy Statement:

- Assign responsibilities to one individual to drive the implementation of this policy within the organization. This individual should coordinate design, maintenance and inspection procedures for all applicable facility locations. All inspections, maintenance, and design specifications should be documented and kept in a central file for review and evaluation.
- Formal assignment of accountabilities for this procedure should be effected. The successful implementation of this process largely depends on the training of the organization's personnel. Responsible and accountable individuals should understand the importance of inspecting, maintaining, documenting and communicating.
- Enforcing zero tolerance to policy deviation is critical. Efficiency and accuracy in the design, inspection, maintenance, documentation and communication processes should make this policy successful. However, success may not be realized if any of these processes are not carried out efficiently and accurately.

2. Review committee:

- Establish a review committee consisting of the previously designated responsible and accountable individuals. This committee should drive the maintenance and continuation of the policy and the procedures.
- Establish a reporting system for employees to follow. The reporting system should provide all employees the ability to report observed walkway safety concerns to the designated accountable individual for each facility.
- Establish acceptable levels of surface slip resistance by creating a list of approved materials that should be used as a treatment on slippery surfaces.
- Follow national standards for the lighting of walking areas. Utilize well-trained, licensed, and insured professional engineers and/or architects to carry out the design process.
- Establish a list of approved cleaning and waxing products for stairways and walkways. An approved cleaning product list should produce uniformity in stairway/walkway maintenance and slip resistance.
- Review plans of all new walking areas for applicability to the policy. Anticipating maintenance and inspection responsibilities should help identify the economic demands associated to new walking areas.
- Review the slip coefficient of new walking areas for compliance. Determine if new walking areas require new maintenance techniques to increase slip resistance.
- Review stairways to ensure compliance with changes to building code and/or accessibility requirements. Stairway elements to review include, but are not limited to:
 - ✓ Widths of treads
 - ✓ Lighting elements

- ✓ Riser height
- ✓ Handicap assistance devices

3. Suggested employee responsibilities:

- Report all trip or fall areas to maintenance for immediate repair.
- Clean up any noted spills/liquid on walking surfaces to reduce the chance of slips and falls.
- Report leaking roofs/pipes or other liquid sources to maintenance for immediate repair.
- Employee generated safety concerns should be reviewed, tracked until remedied, and filed.

4. Surface elements:

- Design, inspect and maintain walking surfaces to assure that they meet national standards. This would include stairway treads, hallways, and sidewalks.
- Utilize signage or other communication methods to alert the users of stairways and walkways to:
 - Differences in the finish or movement characteristics of surfaces
 - Differences in the height of contiguous walkways
- Inspect surface materials in order to maintain sufficient friction and avoid injuries.

5. Maintenance Program:

- Maintain surfaces in accordance with the manufactures specifications. This should contribute to the reliability of the surface and the manufacturers' warranty.
- Schedule and document monthly inspections of all stairways and walkways. Accountable individuals at each facility within the organization should perform these inspections and utilize a checklist for documentation purposes.
- Establish a follow-up procedure for issues identified during the monthly inspections. Work orders generated from checklists or employee notifications should assist in the tracking and follow-up of identified concerns or issues.

Program Activities Calendar:

- Monthly scheduled inspections of the organization's facilities should be made.
- Annual policy compliance audits should be performed. Audits should include a review of monthly facility checklists, the completion of work orders and annual training documentation.
- Annual training at start of each fiscal year should be performed. Training should cover the appropriate maintenance, inspection and work order processes.

Web Site Links:

- National Fire Protection Association
<http://www.nfpa.org>
- International Code Council
<http://www.bocai.org>
- Access Board – Info about Access for People with Disabilities
<http://www.access-board.org>

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SAMPLE WALKWAY & LIGHTING INSPECTION CHECKLIST

TARGET ITEM	YES	NO
1. Stairs, ramps, and walkway surfaces meet all applicable standards.		
2. Walkways designed to alert difference in surfaces and height.		
3. Surface sufficient friction provided?		
4. Handrails and landing meet codes?		
5. Stairs and walkways clearly visible		
6. Emergency lights checked?		
7. Walkways clear of obstacles?		
8. Walkway surfaces maintained to manufacturer's recommendations?		
9. Maintenance program followed?		
10. Walkways meet ADA requirements?		
11. Walkways free of obstructions?		
12. Walkway elevations clearly marked?		
13. Paint speed bumps?		
14. Stairs properly designed?		
15. Stair treads stable?		
16. Outdoor stairs slip resistance?		
17. Handrails secured?		
18. Stairs having two or more risers have handrails?		
19. A contiguous handrail provided?		
20. Illumination permits clear view of the walking surface?		
21. Illumination levels should be a minimum of 20 foot-candles		
22. Emergency lights in every building?		
23. Emergency lighting tested?		
24. Written program documentation?		
25. Treads should be illuminated by 1 foot-candle?		
26. Exits marked by an approved illuminated sign?		
27. Exit readily visible from any direction of exit access?		
28. Externally illuminated signs shall be illuminated by not less than 5 foot-candles.		