



ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS

Safety and Loss Control News

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Parish Facility Self-Inspections

Much of the minor and even larger facility damage that parishes experience could be prevented, if only regular, documented inspections were performed. Doing so takes ownership. Someone has to be responsible for doing the inspection and making sure concerns are addressed.

Besides a daily, cursory examination, a general inspection of the inside and outside of the facility should be conducted at least monthly and documented. Further, to complete the process, an annual inspection by qualified experts should be conducted. If leaders and members would take the time to specifically look for obvious hazards and areas of concern, much larger damage could be prevented. Here are those areas that should be a part of every inspection.

Outside

- **Roof:** Someone should carefully do a visual inspection of the roof. This may mean getting up on the roof or being in a position to at least view it up close. Look for cracks, puddles, missing shingles and rotten wood. Always work with another person, and a solid, appropriate ladder to complete the inspection.
- **Gutters and Downspouts:** While inspecting the roof, check for clogged gutters and downspouts. Make sure they are cleaned out, especially during seasons where leaves and twigs are more likely to clog them. Also check the downspouts and drains on the
- ground, making sure they are flowing correctly, aimed in the proper direction for safe water flow and not crushed or bent in an incorrect fashion.
- **Drainage:** Look at the property, especially during a rainstorm. Determine if water is flowing toward or away from buildings. Any water moving toward the building is a problem.
- **Walls and Chimneys:** Take a close look at exterior walls and chimneys. Look for loose bricks, cracked or missing mortar and rotten wood. Also stand at different angles and see if the walls are bowing.
- **Walking Surfaces:** Walk the parking lots, sidewalks and stairs. Look for cracks, holes, chips and deterioration.
- **Doors and Windows:** Look around doors and windows for cracked or missing glass, deteriorating frames, or windows and doors that are no longer able to be secured.
- **Trees and Electrical Service:** Also look around the grounds for trees and branches that are dead. Not only do they pose an injury hazard but also an electrical hazard if they are close to power lines. Do a cursory look at the electrical service into the building. Often it can become exposed or even be a roost for birds.



Besides a daily, cursory examination, a general inspection of the inside and outside of the facility should be conducted at least monthly and documented.

Inside this issue:

Common Slip, Trip and 2
Fall Exposures

Fleet Safety Tips for 3
Mature Drivers

(Continued on page 2)

Parish Facility Self-Inspections

(Continued from page 1)

Inside

- **Entrances:** The first interior inspection should be at the entrances. They should be free from hazards and obstructions. Look also at floor surfaces and lighting.
- **Hallways and Stairwells:** All hallways and stairwells should be free of obstructions. Even lesser-used hallways should be clear, as they may be used for an emergency evacuation route. Make sure the steps and railings are safe and secure and that there is adequate lighting.
- **Doors and Windows:** Once again, this time from the inside, look for cracked and deteriorating windows and doors. Look for any signs of water entering through them. Make sure they can be secured, especially those at ground level. Also, make sure exit doors are marked and are not chained or locked to prevent proper exit.
- **Storage Areas:** Few parishes have more storage space than they need. Further, many people in parishes are reluctant to throw anything out. As a result, designated storage areas get cluttered, and other locations are used for storage. This will often pose a fire hazard. Inspections should also look at hazards such as flammable objects coming in contact with a heat or electrical source.
- **Furnace Room:** The furnace room is often one of those “extra” storage areas. Ideally, nothing should be stored anywhere near the furnace. To help with this, yellow tape should be placed on the floor around the furnace with instructions that nothing be placed inside the yellow tape. Also, by looking for corrosion on the fittings, leakage, and knowing what the pressure setting should be, will help prevent unexpected leaks or damage.
- **Plumbing:** The plumbing throughout the facility should be checked. Each restroom and water source (kitchens, nursery area, etc.) should be viewed to determine if there are any leaks. A small leak found and repaired early can prevent a more serious problem.
- **Electrical:** All electrical outlets should be inspected. Look, not only for obvious damage, but also determine

if too many items are plugged into an outlet. Use (but not overuse) of power strips or surge protection devices is advised. Open all electrical panels in the facility. Look for obvious damage as well as any switches that have been taped open or rigged so they can't be shut off. If a switch is forced to be permanently on, the source of the electrical surge should be determined and corrected.

- **Flammables:** Finally, all flammables (e.g., cleaning supplies, paint, paint remover, etc.) should be placed in a marked, metal cabinet away from heat sources. Proper ventilation is necessary to prevent heat or fume buildup. Make sure someone is responsible for proper elimination of old supplies.

As mentioned previously, these intentional walk-around inspections should be conducted on a scheduled basis. Any documented concerns should be followed up with corrective action and date completed.

Leave the technical inspections to the experts. Annual inspections that include HVAC, electrical, and building contractors, will be money well spent. A combination of daily, monthly and annual inspections, done by the right people, can go a long way toward the prevention of floods, fires and serious damage.



Common Slip, Trip and Fall Exposures

The following are hazards that can contribute to slip, trip and fall exposures. Keep these items in mind when performing facility self-inspections.

- Poor housekeeping
- Excessively waxed floors
- Uneven walking surfaces
- Loose or frayed carpeting
- Lack of handrails/loose handrails
- Electrical cords in aisles/walkways
- Stairway treads and nosings in poor condition
- Interior and exterior walking surfaces and parking lots in poor condition
- Inadequate indoor and outdoor lighting, especially entrance and exit areas
- Lack of procedures for snow and ice removal
- Broken or deteriorated pews, kneelers and confessionals

Fleet Safety Tips for Mature Drivers

People ages 65 and older are commonly referred to as mature drivers. As these drivers age, they begin to undergo physical changes. These changes often include decreased vision, attention and physical abilities, which can be hazardous to their driving skills and create unsafe situations. Despite these changing physical characteristics that are a normal part of aging, mature adults can still be safe drivers. Driving a motor vehicle with care, taking care of the motor vehicle and knowing how to find a ride in the event you are unable to drive a motor vehicle are steps that can be taken to ensure your safety on the road and protect the well-being of others.



Taking Care of Your Health

Driving safely begins with taking care of your health. Maintaining a healthy diet, exercising to stay physically fit, refraining from having more than one alcoholic drink per day, and quitting the use of tobacco products are all essential to sustaining a healthy body. Never drink alcohol before or while driving, avoid driving while angry, upset, sleepy or ill and do not use your cellphone while driving.

Annual physicals and eye exams are important to ensure that you are physically capable of operating a motor vehicle. If your eyesight is poor, avoid driving at night or during storms. If you are taking prescription medication, ask your doctor or pharmacist about any side effects the medication may have as well as if it is conducive to operating a vehicle. There are many medications that can affect driving even when you may feel fine. If your medication makes you feel dizzy or drowsy, talk to your doctor to find out ways to take the medication so that it doesn't affect your driving.

Pre-Trip Driving Plan

A pre-trip plan is important to safely arriving at your destination. Plan out trips ahead of time and decide what time to leave and which roads to take prior to leaving. Try to avoid heavy traffic, poor weather conditions and high-speed areas. In addition, complete a pre-trip inspection of the vehicle. Items to check include having plenty of gas in the vehicle, keeping windshields and mirrors clean and replacing wiper blades when they are worn out. Check tire pressure, oil and windshield wiper fluids. Schedule regular maintenance with a mechanic for vehicle-tune ups and to have fluids checked, including power steering and transmission fluids.

Use Your Seatbelt and Drive Defensively

The use of seatbelts is very important for mature drivers because of their increased risk of death in crashes. Nearly one in five mature drivers does not use their seatbelt. Seatbelts should be worn over the shoulder and across the lap.

Once you are out on the road, always practice the following

defensive driving principles:

- Drive at the posted speed limit for the road. Driving too fast or too slow is unsafe and should be avoided.
- Pay attention to traffic at all times and be alert to changing conditions in the environment such as the presence of pedestrians or bicyclists, slow moving vehicles and weather conditions.
- Maintain enough following distance between you and the vehicle in front of you.
- Use caution at all intersections. Use your turn signals and remember to look around you for people, bicyclists and other vehicles.
- When changing lanes or backing up, always check blind spots.
- Be very careful at train tracks. Use caution and look both ways for approaching trains. Follow crossing signals.
- As mentioned previously, do not use your cell phone while driving and never text while driving. Some states do not allow the use of cell phones in vehicles at all. If you must use your cell phone, pull safely over to the side of the road before dialing, answering or text messaging.
- While driving do not reach for objects that may be moving inside the vehicle. Secure these items ahead of time so that they do not become lodged underneath the brake or gas pedals.
- Keep your eyes on the road and do not look too long at events taking place outside or along the road. This includes viewing billboards, scenic views and vehicle accidents.
- Avoid backing situations whenever possible.
- When entering or exiting the vehicle, use the Three-Point Contact Rule. Entering or exiting a vehicle is the number one cause of slip, trip and fall accidents for drivers. The Three Point Contact Rule means that three of your four limbs are in contact with the vehicle at all times: two feet and one hand or two hands and one foot. Be aware of your surroundings when entering and exiting the vehicle. Look out for slippery

(Continued on page 4)

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If there are any subjects you would like to see addressed in this newsletter, or questions about a topic presented, please contact Ms. Amanda Weller, Gallagher Bassett Services, Inc., Two Pierce Place, Itasca, IL 60143, Telephone: 815-236-5170, Email: Amanda_Weller@gbtpa.com.

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Fleet Safety Tips for Mature Drivers

(Continued from page 3)

conditions such as rain, puddles, ice, snow, and uneven surfaces.

- If you have trouble making left turns at an intersection, make three right turns instead of one left turn.
- Avoid driving in inclement weather such as rain, sleet or snow.

Evaluate Your Driving

Recognize the signs of unsafe driving. Recent near misses or accidents; tickets for moving violations; comments from passengers regarding close calls, near misses or the driver not seeing other vehicles; and increases in car insurance premiums are all signs that it may be time to reconsider whether or not you should be driving. Talk with your spouse, family and friends to determine your comfort and skill level with the driving process. Another resource to consider is having your driving evaluated by a Driver Rehabilitation Specialist. A Driver Rehabilitation Specialist is a trained professional who can teach you special techniques or suggest special equipment to help you drive safely.

Take a Driver's Safety Class

Driver's safety classes are another excellent resource for helping you to continue driving safely. The instructor of a driver safety class will teach you skills that you can use

while driving. To find a class near you, contact one of the following programs:

- AARP 55 ALIVE Driver Safety Program: 1-888-227-7669
- AAA Safe Driving for Mature Operators Program: Call your local AAA club to find a class near you.
- National Safety Council Defensive Driving Course: 1-800-621-7619
- Driving School Association of the Americas, Inc.: 1-800-270-3722

Develop a Transportation Plan

If your vehicle is in the shop or you have determined that you are no longer able to physically drive a vehicle, there are many ways that you can still get around. Putting together a transportation plan will provide you with a great resource so that you are not limited in getting around. The transportation plan could include rides from friends and family, the number of your local taxi service, bus or train schedules and contact information for local "senior shuttles." Ask your doctor for more information on resources that you can add to this plan.

-Information excerpted from the American Academy of Family Physicians, www.aafp.org, "How to Help the Older Driver" and "Am I a Safe Driver?" bulletins and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "Tips for Safe Driving," <http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/olddrive/olderdriversbook/pages/AppndxB-Safe.html>.