

Key Considerations for Planning and Implementing Routine Safety Self-Inspections

A proactive, ongoing self-inspection process is a critical element of any safety management system (SMS). Routine safety self-inspections are an effective way to recognize, identify, assess, and eliminate hazardous conditions at your organization before they result in injury and illness. Self-inspections are typically performed by your workforce (e.g., supervisors, employees, S&H committee members) rather than your Safety Office. This one pager describes items you should consider when planning and implementing routine safety self-inspections at your organization. Be sure to follow and implement all DoD, Service or Agency, and SMS requirements in your self-inspection process.

AREAS TO INCLUDE

Your safety self-inspection process should include all workplace areas and activities (e.g., storage facilities, warehouses, office spaces, industrial areas). Your self-inspection processes can also include periodic inspections of tools and equipment (e.g., forklifts, powered industrial trucks, transportation vehicles, safety devices). Create a list of all these areas and items for inclusion in your process.

FREQUENCY OF INSPECTIONS

First, follow any DoD, Service or Agency, or SMS self-inspection frequency requirements. Then, use your knowledge of the hazards, risks, and work environments to determine if you need to increase the frequency of your self-inspections. Inspect at greater frequencies work areas likely to have more hazards or with more risks. For example, you may decide quarterly inspections suffice for your administrative areas, but your welding shops require monthly inspections.

CHECKLISTS

Checklists help your inspectors identify specific hazards in the workplace. You may use them to document and verify the completion of each inspection. There are self-inspection templates available for a variety of areas (e.g., areas, office spaces, warehouses, transportation vehicles). Consider tailoring these checklists to your organization based upon applicability. Refer to sample [OSHA checklists](#) for examples of items to include in your checklists.



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INSPECTION SELECTION AND TRAINING

Implementing an effective self-safety inspection program requires training employees on safety procedures applicable to your work environment. OSHA recommends involving employees in your inspection program so they gain a better understanding of jobs, tasks, and hazards at your organization. Use the information in [OSHA Publication 3071](#), “Job Hazard Analysis,” to train employees on hazard identification techniques, even if you do not use job hazard analyses (JHAs).

SUPERVISOR INVOLVEMENT IN SELF-INSPECTIONS

Supervisors must understand your self-inspection process. Whether they lead self-inspections or not, they need to speak with employees about the daily hazards they face and how to help identify and reduce hazards in the work area. If supervisors conduct self-inspections, ask them to set aside time to conduct the inspections with employees, using it as a teaching-learning experience, while also increasing employee participation in your S&H program.



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WHAT TO LOOK FOR DURING INSPECTIONS

Every self-inspection should include observations of the people, work environment, equipment, and processes within the assigned inspection area. Ask inspectors to observe not only your employees, but contractors, sub-contractors, and temporary employees, too. They may display unsafe behaviors with the potential to create unsafe conditions.

TRACKING COMPLETED INSPECTIONS AND IDENTIFIED FINDINGS

Think about the mechanisms and processes you have to ensure your inspectors complete scheduled self-inspections in a timely manner. Have inspectors document any and all findings, even those corrected on the spot. Consider how to capture, track, and close out identified findings. Sometimes you may need to work with your Facilities Department to assign work orders, too.

USE RESULTS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

Review inspection results with employees so they can recognize and identify day-to-day hazards in their work areas. Promote the completion of scheduled safety self-inspections and incorporate inspection findings into training. Continue to monitor and assess the processes and follow up on inspection results to identify possible trends. Consider setting organizational goals and objectives to emphasize your inspection process when it's not running as expected. An effective and meaningful self-inspection process can only be worthwhile if the hazards identified are addressed by management for corrective action.

For additional information on the SMCX's services, please visit the SMCX-hosted website at: <https://www.smcx.org/>.