

# 8 workplace safety tips for your small business.



Maintaining a safe workplace protects your employees, customers, and bottom line. Follow these eight workplace safety tips to make sure you're not overlooking potential hazards in your small business.

**1. Learn the risks.** Knowing which workplace injuries happen most often is the first step to preventing them. The most common workplace injuries result from:

- Slips, trips, and falls
- Overexertion
- Repetitive motion
- Being struck by an object or piece of equipment
- Vehicle accidents

**2. Be a good housekeeper.** Keep stairs and walkways free of clutter and clean up spills quickly to reduce the risk of slips and falls. Make sure objects and equipment in elevated areas are properly secured so they won't fall on anyone. Electrical cords should be neatly secured so they won't be a tripping hazard.

**3. Maintain your building well.** Keeping electrical, heating and cooling, and ventilation systems well maintained can help prevent injuries and illnesses. For instance, regularly cleaning air ducts and moisture-prone areas can help keep dust, mold, and bacteria to a minimum. And don't forget the outside of your building as well. Keep walkways free of ice and snow in winter, and trim trees and

shrubs.

**4. Train employees to work safely.** Make sure your employees know the safest way to do their job. This includes educating them on safety procedures for the equipment they are using, as well as any protective gear they must wear, such as hard hats, goggles, gloves, ear protection, etc. If a special certification is needed to use some equipment, make sure those workers are trained and certified. All employees should take regular breaks to avoid overexertion, muscle strain, or fatigue on the job.

**5. Make sure your workplace isn't working against you.** Improving the ergonomics of your workspace makes your employees' jobs easier – and safer. Whether it's moving frequently used supplies and tools to lower shelves, providing equipment that makes it easier to lift and move inventory, or even redesigning work processes to avoid repetitive movements that cause strain and injury, investments in ergonomics pay off with happier and healthier employees.

**6. Contact a loss control consultant for tips and resources.** If your business is in an industry at high risk for workplace injuries (construction, for instance), your insurer may offer loss control services to help reduce that risk. Loss control experts can assist with safety program development, no-cost training materials, and more.

**7. Take your safety program on the road.** If your business uses company vehicles, make sure the workers driving them are well trained and follow safe driving practices. Check the driving record of any employees who will be regularly using your vehicles. If you have multiple company vehicles, consider investing in a **fleet telematics** system to help monitor driver and vehicle safety. Doing so can also save you money on your commercial auto policy.

**8. Document your safety practices.** A safety handbook that documents all your company's safety and emergency procedures is essential for your employees. It helps educate new employees and serves as a valuable reference for long-time workers. You can also use it to provide an occasional refresher course for your staff, if you feel that safety practices have gotten lax or have been forgotten.

Need help? The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has a **free downloadable handbook** to guide you in creating a safety program for your small business.

And since no safety program is foolproof, make sure you have the **workers compensation** and other **business insurance** policies you need to keep your company protected. A local, independent agent can help you determine which kinds of coverage are right for your business.

Establishing and maintaining a safe workplace takes some time, but it's worth it. Your efforts will keep your employees protected, ensure your business runs smoothly — and put your mind at ease.