

Premises Inspections

Slips, trips, and falls are the most common type of accident that occurs in grocery stores. When a customer falls in a store, premises liability case law in many states places the burden on business owners to prove they consistently take reasonable steps to identify and remove potential hazards in a timely manner. Documented Premises Inspections is the best way for grocery stores to demonstrate that they take reasonable care to protect their customers and employees.

You can effectively monitor your floor by following these guidelines:

Pay attention to conditions that can lead to slips, trips, and falls

- Watch for spilled liquids on the floor; dropped ice, produce, or other product; broken pallet pieces; plastic wrap; cases, cans or boxes left in aisles; step stools; and other debris.

The best defense – effective Premises Inspections

- Consistently walk the sales floor with a broom or dust mop to sweep and remove debris and dropped items. Have on hand cloths or paper towels for quick liquid cleanups.
- Pay special attention to the front entryway, and produce and bulk food departments because of the heavier foot traffic in these areas and the greater potential for tracked in water, spills, and dropped food.
- Return damaged or emptied packages to an area designated by your store supervisor.
- Return any misplaced items to their proper shelf or display area.

Timely and Accurate Premises Inspections

- Implement an electronic sweep program such as Argo Risk Tech, which is considered to be the best documentation of a Premises Inspection.
- Prepare and complete an iWalk each hour and/or half hour. Never complete the iWalk until you have walked/swept the sales floor and other customer-access areas.
- If you miss a scheduled walk; please complete a premises inspection as soon as possible. Walks must be completed and logged accurately in order to serve as a credible indication of reasonable care.

Consistent timing for walks and sweeps

- Conduct hourly inspections of the sales floor, store aisles, perimeter departments, and restrooms.
- Conduct inspections every half hour in high foot traffic areas such as the front entryway and produce and bulk food departments.
- Check for liquids and other debris on the floor.
- Inspect the conditions of mats and rugs to ensure that they lie flat and do not bunch or curl. Notify your manager if the mats need to be replaced.

Effective cleanup procedures

- Train employees to respond immediately to all cleanup pages. The first associate to arrive at the scene should never leave the spill unattended. Flag down or call for help from another employee if necessary. If no other help is available, place carts around the spill.
- Clean up small liquid spills with paper towels or a rag, and ensure that the floor is completely dry. If the cleanup involves larger spills or sticky substances, mark off the area with two yellow “Caution!” signs. Place floor cones at the edges of the spill so customers can avoid the hazard.
- Verbally caution customers to be careful and avoid the spill area.
- Keep warning signs in place until the area is completely dry.

Courtesy of RiskPoint Insurance Advisors | Joe Scarpello and Melissa Johnson

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