

SAFETY MATTERS

RISK
MANAGEMENT
NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE **AUGUST 14, 2026**

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BACK TO SCHOOL SAFETY: ENSURING SCHOOL FACILITIES ARE READY FOR THE YEAR

OBJECTIVE To highlight the benefits of facility inspections and to support schools in preparing safe, functional, and well-maintained facilities for the start of the academic year.

The best way to ensure an effective and efficient safety inspection is to have a comprehensive checklist specific to your facility. Checklists are only beneficial when followed, adhered to, and carried out. Not only do they prevent vague inspections and keep facility management and school administrators from missing important aspects, but they also provide a step-by-step method for analyzing machinery, workspaces, and safety and health practices and procedures.

THE INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Overconfidence can lead to complacency, which can then lead to missing small, routine details. And it's those details that can be the difference between "just another day" and a disaster.

Airplane pilots, medical personnel, first responders, and Cal-Tech JPL Engineers (rocket scientists) have all developed checklists for their respective fields when it comes to safety in their industry. All have education and experience in their jobs and thus understand that sometimes being very good at a job and well-trained can sometimes make us forget the basics. That's why a simple inspection checklist can be one of the most valuable tools for keeping the basics from being overlooked.





BENEFITS OF INSPECTIONS

- They allow people to work systematically through the workplace, keeping the process focused, organized, and on task
- Written records provide accountability for those in charge of safety and health
- Written records also allow an outside agency to assess your safety and health guidelines and procedures, offering a clear record of regular and thorough inspections that confirm a commitment to a safe working and learning environment
- A systematic procedure ensures that student and employee safety and well-being are a priority, which [improves campus and workplace safety culture](#) and gives students and employees confidence in safety standards

Sometimes, the problem with such a simple and repetitive tool is that it can feel overly nitpicky and detail-oriented. Many workers are resistant to checking boxes for tasks they believe they can do without adding this tedious step. That is, until they overlook a detail.

INDOOR/OUTDOOR FACILITY INSPECTIONS

The following items are some examples of what should be included when conducting indoor and outdoor facility inspections:

- **Indoor Area**
 - Ceilings, lighting, and fixtures
 - Walls, doors, windows, and interior conditions
 - Floors, stairs, and walkways
 - Restrooms, sinks, and drinking fountains
 - Fire and life-safety equipment
 - Electrical outlets, cords, and panels
 - Storage areas and housekeeping conditions
 - Interior sinks/fountains/restrooms
- **Outdoor Area**
 - Sidewalks, hardscape, trees and grass areas
 - Playgrounds/athletic areas/outdoor structures
 - Gates/fencing/handrails
 - Parking lots, curbs, and drop-off areas
 - Drainage and exterior lighting

SUPPORT FOR FACILITY INSPECTIONS

Checklists are less effective when imposed without explanation, especially in environments where individuals feel their time is being controlled. To gain buy-in, it's important to clearly communicate the checklist's purpose and benefits. When people understand how it supports safety and efficiency, they're more likely to use it consistently and effectively.

Consistent, Effective Inspections

Even if you get your team on board with implementing the general facility safety inspection checklist, the hard truth is that checklists can get boring. And even the most well-meaning staff member can get distracted or glaze over.

- Assign different staff members to complete inspections to encourage fresh perspectives.
- Use color and visual cues to make the checklist engaging and easy to navigate.
- Review the checklist annually and incorporate updates or recommendations as needed.
- When possible, periodically change the order of checklist items to help maintain attention and reduce routine-driven responses.



RESOURCES

- [CA Department of Education \(CDE\) CASH - FIT Guidebook](#)
- [US Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) - Assess & Improve Your School Environment](#)
- [Sample Facility Checklist](#)

This California Schools JPA Safety Matters publication is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.





SIGN-IN SHEET

**BACK TO SCHOOL SAFETY: ENSURING SCHOOL FACILITIES ARE READY
FOR THE YEAR**

Facilitator: _____ Facilitator's Signature: _____

Date: _____ Organization: _____ Department: _____

Participants:

Name: _____	Signature: _____
Name: _____	Signature: _____
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