



**SELF-INSPECTION
SAFETY
CHECKLIST
FOR CHILDCARE
ORGANIZATIONS**

A FEW PERIODIC PRECAUTIONS CAN HELP PREVENT TRAGEDY

Many of the accidents and injuries that occur at childcare facilities and daycares each year could have been avoided with a few simple precautions.

Decades of experience serving organizations that serve others has given Church Mutual Insurance Company, S.I. (a stock insurer)¹ a wealth of valuable insights on how to keep those in your care safe. We've based this Self-Inspection Safety Checklist on safety studies and actual claims submitted to Church Mutual® by daycares, preschools, afterschool programs and camps doing the same work you do. It is designed to help you prevent and reduce injuries, property damage, loss and other costly liabilities—and stay focused on the children in your care.

How to Use This Checklist

We've organized it by common areas of concern including play areas, food safety, data security and transportation. As you go through your facility, check off items that are complete or already been addressed. Items that aren't applicable to your organization can be crossed off. What will be left are issues that need to be addressed.

Once you've identified hazards that need attention, make a plan and set a timetable for addressing areas of concern, starting with the most critical items. If you need support, check out the risk control resources at [ChurchMutual.com](https://www.ChurchMutual.com).

Next Steps

Inspect your facility regularly to track progress on problem areas and catch new risks. Keep a calendar of when inspections occurred and any improvements made as a result.

This booklet is not a certified manual that will guarantee full compliance with federal, state or local regulations. It is just one step in a total risk management program.

¹Church Mutual is a stock insurer whose policyholders are members of the parent mutual holding company formed on 1/1/20. S.I. = a stock insurer.

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GENERAL RISK MANAGEMENT

Policies and Procedures

- Emergency phone numbers are posted by all telephones.
- Employee job descriptions and performance reviews reference compliance with safety policies and preventive actions required by each position. We have a written safety policy that includes:
 - Programs and procedures to comply with applicable local, state and federal childcare center safety standards.
 - Accident investigation and reporting procedures.
 - Accountability standards and objectives for managers.
 - Reporting procedures for suspected sexual abuse and threats of violence.
 - Annual review of these policies and procedures with all staff.
- We conduct regular health and safety inspections.
- We investigate accidents and near-misses to identify potential risks.

Employee Screening

- All prospective candidates are required to complete an application.
- We interview candidates only after contacting previous employers and other references listed on applications or resumes.
- We look for gaps on resumés.
- All candidates are interviewed by at least two staff members.
- Interview questions are specifically structured to elicit high-risk responses related to preferences or activities that could signal the candidate is a potential sexual abuser.
- We perform background checks on all prospective employees. The checks are run after a conditional job offer has been made but before their employment is finalized.
- On offering an applicant a position, we ask for a complete set of fingerprints to keep on file.

Training

- Staff are fully trained to comply with state sexual abuse laws and mandatory reporting requirements.
- Staff are required to complete sexual abuse awareness training on an annual basis that includes information on how to identify grooming behaviors by a potential abuser.
- We have established a response process for suspected sexual abuse that focuses on protecting the victim and other children in our care.
- Staff are trained to recognize and report behaviors that could signal an individual is contemplating violence against a former spouse, child or staff member at or near the facility.
- Staff are trained in and perform regular drills using de-escalation techniques as well as violence response protocols such as ALICE.

Children

- We have a written standard of conduct for adult/child interactions.
- We follow recommended child/staff ratios for the age groups we serve.
- Parents are fully informed about any off-campus activities their children will be participating in and have given written permission.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

First Aid

- Adequate first-aid kit(s) are easily accessible in an emergency.
- First-aid responders are properly trained and provided with equipment to protect against bloodborne pathogens.
- Records are kept of all first-aid care provided to employees, children and guests.
- We have a procedure in place to properly dispose of contaminated first-aid materials and needles.
- One or more employees are qualified to render first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
- We have a properly maintained Automated External Defibrillator (AED) on-site and designated individuals are trained in its use.

Food Safety

- We have written procedures established to help prevent allergic reactions from common allergens such as peanuts.
- Staff and volunteers are required to follow aseptic hand-washing procedures in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines.
- Single-use gloves, spatulas or tongs are used to keep hands from coming into direct contact with exposed, ready-to-eat foods.
- Staff and volunteers are trained to separate foods to avoid cross-contamination. Raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs are separated from other foods. Separate cutting boards and utensils are used for each different food type.
- Canned and dry foods are disposed of if they exceed their shelf-life dates.
- Thermometers are used to monitor the temperature of hot and cold perishable foods when stored, prepared and served.
- Food waste and trash containers are emptied regularly.
- We have an established policy for handling, storing and disposing of leftover perishable foods.
- Our facility is regularly inspected by a professional pest control service.

FACILITY SECURITY

Security Systems

- We have an electronic security system (doors, windows) monitored by a central station.
- Audible alarm systems are present and audible to exterior grounds.
- Security cameras are placed in critical areas such as entries, hallways, areas of high occupancy and where valuables are stored or handled.
- Our security system is inspected and tested annually by a licensed contractor.
- Assigned personnel check that windows and exit doors are locked before leaving the building at the end of the day.
- Keys to the facility are marked "Do Not Copy."

Policies and Procedures

- Records are kept of all individuals who have a key or access card to the facility.
- Locks and safe combinations are changed when employees with access quit or are let go, and keycard access is terminated.
- Windows accessible from ground level are protected with window locks, wire mesh or bars, and are free of obstructions behind which burglars could hide.
- We maintain a detailed written, photographic or video inventory of building contents and valuables.
- The area is regularly patrolled by police or security contractors at night.



Valuables inventories should include each item's brand, model number and serial number, and when possible, cost and date of purchase. Receipts for new purchases should also be kept with these records.

DATA AND CYBERSECURITY

Organizational Preparedness

- We have a written cybersecurity policy which includes:
 - A process for notifying those impacted by an information breach.
 - Required password changes every three months.
- Information that is critical to the operation of our organization is backed up regularly.
- We have a written internet use policy that provides examples of acceptable and unacceptable use.
- We have policies for disposing of old computer equipment that protect against data loss (destroying or wiping drives, etc.).
- We have insurance coverage for data breach protection.



Passwords should include a combination of upper and lowercase letters, numbers, symbols and special characters.

IT Systems

- We regularly check our systems for malware and viruses.
- Computers and other devices require a password and automatically log out after a pre-determined amount of time.
- We utilize firewalls and encryption to restrict access to the network and data.
- All internet-connected devices are updated with the most current versions of software and apps.
- Unused applications are deleted to reduce the risk of infection from malware or ransomware.
- Access to IT systems is terminated when a staff member ends employment with the organization.

Staff Preparedness

- Only approved individuals are allowed access to our IT system and devices.
- Staff with access to computers and other devices have been trained to identify phishing, ransomware and other malicious emails.
- All relevant staff have been trained on the cybersecurity policy and the responsibilities within it.
- Those with cybersecurity responsibilities have been trained and provided with procedures on how to respond to a cybersecurity risk or attack.

VEHICLES AND TRANSPORTATION

Drivers

- All drivers who operate vehicles on behalf of the business are properly licensed and at least 21 years old.
- A copy of each driver's license is kept on file.
- We regularly check motor vehicle records for all qualified drivers for moving violations and at-fault accidents within the past three years.
- We have a written policy banning the use of cell phones and other mobile devices while operating motor vehicles.
- Employees are prohibited from using work-owned vehicles for personal use.
- Drivers do a pre-trip and post-trip inspection documenting a vehicle's condition, any mechanical problems and odometer readings before and after trips. Mechanical issues noted are promptly repaired.



Church Mutual recommends that any employee driving on behalf of your organization be at least 25 years old.

Vehicles

- Vehicles are routinely inspected by a trained mechanic.
- Written repair and maintenance records are kept for each vehicle.
- Drivers are instructed to never leave keys in a vehicle when left unattended.
- Drivers are required to conduct an end-of-trip walk-through to make sure children are not hiding or sleeping onboard.
- When transporting children, proper child safety seats are used based on the child's height and weight.

FACILITY MAINTENANCE AND SAFETY

Stairways and Hallways

- Rugs, carpets and floor tiles are periodically checked for tears, rips or chipping that could cause tripping. Any defects noted are promptly repaired.
- Steps and stairways have slip-resistant surfaces.
- All stairways with four or more steps have securely anchored handrails.
- Doors, passageways or stairways which could be mistaken for exits are appropriately marked NOT AN EXIT, TO BASEMENT, STOREROOM, etc.

Entrances and Exits

- Sidewalks are kept clear of loose gravel or other hazards that might cause trips or falls.
- Snow is removed promptly from entryways and sidewalks, and icy spots are treated as soon as possible.
- Walk-off mats are used at all entrances to collect grit, water, ice and snow.
- Walk-off mats extend at least three paces into the building and are inspected and cleaned frequently.
- All emergency exits are kept unlocked and free of obstructions.
- All exits are marked with a lighted exit sign and powered by an emergency source.
- Backup batteries in exit signs and emergency lights are replaced annually.

Kitchen

- Kitchen is equipped with slip-resistant floor mats.
- Kitchen is equipped with a flashlight, properly stocked first-aid kit and Class K fire extinguisher.
- Waste containers are emptied immediately when full.
- "Caution Wet Floor" signs are used when washing floors or after cleaning up a spill.
- A mop is conveniently located to quickly clean up spills.
- Hot pads and oven mitts are provided for handling hot pans and pots.
- Knives, cutting blades and other sharp objects are kept securely away from children when not in use.
- All dishwasher detergents and chemical containers are labeled and kept out of reach of children.

Fire Prevention and Protection

- We have a fire alarm system, and it is tested annually.
- Smoke detectors are hardwired into the electrical system and equipped with battery backup.
- Carbon monoxide detectors are hardwired into the electrical system and equipped with battery backup.
- Fire extinguishers are checked and tagged annually by a qualified service vendor.
- Fire extinguishers are visually checked at least monthly to see if they are properly charged.
- Fire extinguishers are properly mounted in highly visible locations.
- Fire extinguishers are placed a maximum travel distance of 50 feet in the facility.
- Employees are regularly instructed in the proper use of extinguishers and fire protection procedures.
- Our sprinkler system, if any, is inspected and tested annually by a qualified service vendor.
- Storage areas and furnace/boiler rooms are kept organized and clear of obstructions. Combustible materials are stored away from heat sources.

Electrical Hazards

- We use surge protectors to protect valuable electronic equipment.
- Unused electrical outlets are equipped with spring-loaded or twist-type safety faceplates, not plastic plugs.
- Electrical outlets located near water are equipped with ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI)-type receptacles.
- Electrical appliances (vacuum cleaners, vending machines, refrigerators, freezers, air conditioner, etc.) are grounded.
- We do not use extension cords in place of permanent wiring.
- Power cords and extension cords have grounding conductor plugs; frayed, cracked or dried-out cords are replaced.
- Circuits are properly identified on the fuse box cover.
- A 3-foot clearance is maintained in front of all electrical panels.
- There are no missing or open breakers in the electrical panel.

PREVENTING ACCIDENTS AND TRAGEDIES ONE STEP AT A TIME

Implementing a risk management program may seem daunting, but every step you take will make your children and staff safer and your organization more secure. And you don't have to do it alone. Church Mutual specializes in protecting the people, properties and missions of purpose-driven organizations like yours. See how we do it and find more childcare-focused safety resources at [ChurchMutual.com](https://www.churchmutual.com).

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PROTECTING
THE GREATER
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