

Loss

Control



FARMERS

Information Bulletin

Parking Lot Safety

The parking area for your customers is the first place where your customers could be injured or sustain a loss while shopping or conducting business at your establishment. It is important that this area be evaluated for unsafe hazards or conditions on a regular basis to reduce the potential of injuries to visitors to your premises.

The potential loss causes for parking lots include:

- *Slip, trip and fall hazards*
- *Uneven or broken walk surfaces*
- *Parking lot signs*
- *Poor lighting*
- *Objects or vegetation that obstruct views*
- *Traffic flow patterns*
- *Shopping carts*
- *Neighborhood environment*

Controlling these potential loss causes can reduce your potential liability and provide a safer parking lot area for your customers.

Slip, trip and fall hazards can be controlled by regular inspections of the parking areas around your facility. Note any debris, trash, or other materials in the parking lot and have them picked up and removed. Also look for any areas where oil or grease may have accumulated. Any area of this nature that is in a walking area needs to be cleaned to reduce customer slip and falls.

Broken or uneven walking surfaces such as cracks or pot holes in parking or drive areas and protrusions or disruptions in the paved surfaces need to be corrected or repaired immediately. Curbs and speed control bumps or devices need to be visually identified by contrasting paint.

Parking lot signs can be permanent or temporary. All signs need to be placed in areas of the parking lot that provide the least potential of contact by people or vehicles. Temporary signs need to be properly secured and if they are equipped with lights, the power supply cord or line must be placed in a manner in which customers or visitors are unable to come in contact with the line in any way.

Many businesses have nighttime hours of operations. Proper lighting is important to ensure that the customers are able to move through the parking lot and easily see any potential hazards or conditions. Review the parking lot during nighttime conditions to check for areas where lighting may be obstructed or inadequate. Correct the lighting in these areas immediately.

Decorative walls, planters, and vegetation are provided for many parking areas. While these are intended for improving the overall appearance of the facility, they could also be a potential source of injury for customers, patrons, or persons passing by the property. Keep all decorative walls, fences, and similar items in good condition. They should not be too high as to block the vision of persons entering or leaving the parking areas. Don't arrange them in any manner that could provide hiding places for uninvited persons who may intend harm to your customers.

Traffic flow in the parking areas should be designed to move traffic in a single direction per parking lane where possible and where allowed by local ordinances. Provide properly placed direction signs or highly visible painted signs on the parking and drive surfaces to assist with traffic flow. Pedestrian cross walks must be marked and speed limit controls or measures provided. Crosswalks need to be located near building entrances where possible.

Shopping carts can be found in the parking areas of retail centers and supermarkets. Customers tend to leave carts near where they transferred their purchases to their vehicle. Provide cart storage areas for the convenience of your customers and provide a cart patrol person or staff to ensure that carts are removed from the parking area or moved to the cart storage area. Regularly scheduled cart patrols must be established to reduce the potential of stray carts in the parking area that could be a hazard to your customers.

The neighborhood environment can act as a parking lot exposure. As neighborhoods change, so do the potential for parking lot incidents such as street robbery, car jacking,

vandalism, and theft of customer's property from parked vehicles. A well-lit parking lot is a key to reducing this type of activity. The use of video surveillance equipment and placing "no loitering" signs also help. Do not be reluctant to contact local law enforcement when you note persons loitering in your parking lot.

The parking lot is an important feature for your business operations but it does not have to be a potential liability for you. Keeping these control methods in mind and applying them when appropriate for your operations, you can reduce your potential for parking lot injuries or incidents to your customers.