

Loss Control

# INSIGHTS



Throughout his three years in the accounting department for a company, Sean Davis had been a model employee. Sean insisted on handling any problems or discrepancies personally, and made it clear that the buck stopped with him.

In fact, many bucks did stop with him — followed him home and neatly deposited themselves into his bank account. In three short years, Sean managed to use his authority to bilk the company of nearly \$100,000. If janitorial workers had not discovered a suspicious amount of discarded receipts, the theft would have continued undetected.

Is your organization immune to these types of losses? *Read on ...*

» **FREE OSHA POSTERS**  
 Advertisements suggesting that OSHA workplace posters must be purchased from private companies may be misleading. Official OSHA posters are available at no cost on the publications page of osha.gov or by calling 202-693-1888.

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*The Spanish Outreach Trainers Lists and References for Spanish Trainers* are new web-based resources for Spanish-speaking trainers and students. Learn more about these tools at osha.gov.

» **VENTILATION STANDARDS**  
 Two industry consensus standards on ventilation have been revised — *Fundamentals Governing the Design and Operation of Local Exhaust Ventilation Systems* and *Recirculation of Air from Industrial Process Exhaust Systems*. The revised standards are

available through the American Industrial Hygiene Association at aiha.org and the American National Standards Institute at ansi.org

## COMMON-SENSE MEASURES PREVENT EMPLOYEE THEFT

Specialists say the cost of employee theft and embezzlement adds up to billions of dollars annually. According to the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, organizations lose 6 percent of their revenues to dishonesty from within. Security experts estimate that as many as 30 percent of all employees do steal, and that another 60 percent will steal if given sufficient motive and opportunity. With dramatic figures like these, taking steps to eliminate theft and graft within a firm are sure to yield returns. The Small Business Administration offers the following tips to reduce employee theft.

### KEEP A CLOSER EYE

Watch for the tell-tale signs of internal theft. One subtle but noticeable indication of dishonest employees may be an unexplained rise in their living standards. Pay close attention to management-level personnel who insist on handling routine clerical tasks themselves. And be on guard for clients complaining about overcharging or inconsistencies in shipping and billing practices.

### FIND PEOPLE YOU CAN TRUST

Some employees have theft in mind from the start. You can weed out some of these people by performing thorough background checks on all new hire prospects, particularly for sensitive positions involving the flow of money.

### MAKE IT HARD TO STEAL

Even though delegation of tasks is unavoidable, try to have a management-level supervisor oversee inventory and bookkeeping. If this is not possible, consider dividing these tasks among several staff members so no single employee has too much authority. Occasional inspections or audits of inventory and bookkeeping help in preventing fraud and theft. It is possible to install physical obstacles to theft, such as alarm systems and secured, restricted areas. However, be aware that such obvious measures can have a negative effect on morale.

### DETERMINE CLEAR POLICIES

To reinforce these other measures, a company should distribute clear, written policies on ethical behavior to be signed by each employee — including the owner.

### WORK TOGETHER WITH EMPLOYEES

Workers will be less likely to steal if you create an environment in which they think there is a good chance of being caught. Training and “employee awareness” programs can inform workers about stealing problems and keep them on the lookout for theft of any kind. To make a security program such as this effective, it is crucial employees know they can turn over incriminating information on anyone in the firm without fearing job loss or other repercussions.

### PROVIDE ALTERNATIVES TO STEALING

The most troubling cases of employee theft occur when workers are in desperate financial straits. Let employees know in advance that they can come to management for assistance rather than resorting to theft. Employee substance abuse is intimately linked with financial problems and theft. If your firm does not already have a procedure for screening workers for drugs or alcohol, it may benefit from one.

### SET AN EXAMPLE

Employees need to know that one uniform ethical standard applies to everyone in the firm. Executives and managers should be positive role models for workers.

## The Fraud Triangle

According to loss control experts, employee theft usually occurs when three key elements exist.

**Opportunity** — Even the most honest employee can be tempted to steal when he/she sees there are vulnerabilities in your system.

**Pressure** — Drug or alcohol dependency, gambling problems, divorce, serious illness and other economic pressures can lead to employee theft.

**Attitude** — Some employees may think that the company owes them something and they have a right to take it.

# 10 SAFE HIRING TOOLS

Almost 10 percent of job applicants have criminal convictions and up to one-third of resumes contain serious falsehoods or omissions. To promote safe hiring, Lester Rosen, president of Employment Screening Resources\*, a national background screening firm, suggests the following 10 evaluation tools.

- 1 Have each job applicant sign a consent form for a background check, including a check for criminal records, past employment and education.
- 2 Employment applications should ask about criminal records in the broadest possible terms allowed by law, and should not be limited to felonies.
- 3 Advise applicants that the firm will perform a criminal background and reference check as a standard business practice. Ask whether the applicant has any concerns to share.
- 4 Applicants should be asked during an interview what they think a former employer will say about them.
- 5 Applications must clearly state that any false or misleading statements or material omissions are grounds to terminate the hiring process or employment, regardless of when it is discovered.
- 6 If employment begins before a background check is completed, state in writing that employment is contingent upon a satisfactory background report.
- 7 Verify past employment. This is probably the single most important tool for an employer.
- 8 Obtain a listing of all addresses for the past 10 years. This is also needed for a criminal search.
- 9 Include future screenings in the consent language in case a future investigation is needed for a criminal search.
- 10 Check for criminal records. You may consider convictions or cases currently pending, but not arrests. Also, certain cases may not legally be used for employment decisions.

\* For additional information about Employment Screening Resources, visit [ESRcheck.com](http://ESRcheck.com).



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Count on EMC to help keep your workplace safe with free safety signs. For more information, visit the Loss Control pages of [emcinsurance.com](http://emcinsurance.com).



# It's Time To Prepare Your Roof For Winter



Preparing roofs for winter is a task often overlooked by many building owners, because they believe if the roof is not leaking, there are no problems. Benchmark, a leading roof and pavement consulting firm, recommends checking roof areas before snow, high winds and other winter weather conditions set in, to prevent costly leaks. To maintain a sound roof, follow these steps:

## Active Leaks

A qualified contractor should be notified to make repairs as soon as leaks occur. If the roof system is under warranty, the manufacturer should also be notified of any leaks.

## Field Membrane

Walk over the roof area to see if anything looks out of place, such as blistering, ridges in the membrane, eroded areas, misplaced ballast, or misaligned or loose pavers. If these deficiencies are occurring, they should be corrected as soon as possible by a qualified contractor.

## Penetration Flashings

All penetrations should be checked to be sure they are sealed and secured.

## Perimeter Flashings

The perimeter flashings should be checked for securement and any openings that could allow water to enter the building.

## Roof-Related Sheet Metal

All roof-related metal should be checked for securement, sealed joint laps and missing components. These items could cause problems during winter months.

## Drainage

Poor drainage is one of the most common problems during winter. The following should be done:

- Make sure all drains are open and allowing water to exit
- Clean all debris in and around drains that could plug strainers and restrict water flow
- Check gutters and downspouts to make sure they are secured and that all debris is removed
- If heat tapes are in place in the gutters, downspouts or drains, make sure they are in working order

## Miscellaneous/Adjacent Conditions

The following items are also often overlooked prior to winter, and should be checked for deficiencies — ductwork, door seals, open joints in walls, skylights and penetrations through walls.

By making sure all these items are checked prior to winter, you can save yourself some headaches and money.

Remember, it's usually more costly to hire a contractor during winter when it's more difficult to find and repair a problem.

## TEN MOST COMMON ROOF PROBLEMS

Most roofs are the best they are going to be at the time they are installed. Unfortunately, problems are inevitable as the roof ages. Without proper and routine maintenance, minor problems can become catastrophic. *Buildings* magazine identified the following top 10 problems that plague low-slope roofs.

1. **Roof leaks and moisture**
2. **Blow-offs, tenting, reduced wind uplift resistance and billowing**
3. **Poor installation and unsatisfactory workmanship**
4. **Lack of maintenance**
5. **Ponding water**
6. **Punctures and the addition of penetrations post-installation**
7. **Safety**
8. **Improper repairs**
9. **Shrinkage**
10. **Blistering**

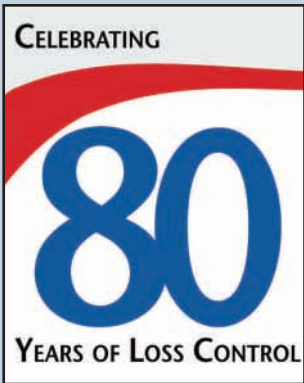
Ensuring a quality installation, providing the roof with consistent maintenance and the early detection of problems through routine inspections can help maximize roof life. As the roof ages, the likelihood of problems increases; however, it is how these problems are addressed that will determine the fate and future of your roof system.

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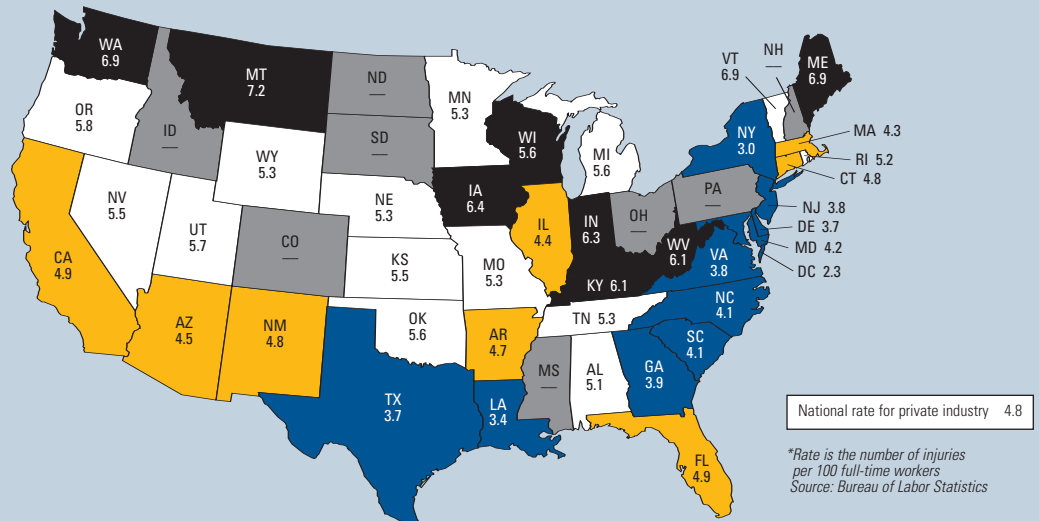
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# How Safe Is Your State For Workers?

How well are employers in your state controlling the incidence of workplace injuries? According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the best indicator of a state's performance compared to other states is its injury rate. Check the map below to see how your state ranks. For more detailed information about your state, consult with your state's Department of Labor.

**Rate\* of total recordable injuries, by state, 2004**



Higher than 5.9      4.3 to 5.0      Data not available  
5.1 to 5.9      Lower than 4.3

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