## **Conducting a Premises Safety Audit**

The physical layout and inherent potential risks found at any commercial business property are unique. To ensure that your business premise is free from safety hazards, it is best to contact trained occupational safety professionals. However, management can perform a thorough check by carefully reviewing all potential hazards to protect employees and visitors alike.

Creating a thorough risk assessment consists of several steps:

- Determining who could be injured
- How they might be injured
- Establishing whether current safeguards are adequate or whether more should be done
- Fully understanding and complying with all appropriate federal and state safety laws and regulations

Premises safety essentially breaks down into 4 main components which are:

- **Safety** includes overall maintenance of the physical premises, both inside and outside and entails machinery, equipment, electrical systems, elevators, entrances and exits, use of adequate and approved personal protection equipment, fire exits and equipment, windows, warning signs, quality of surfaces, access.
- **Health Issues** includes issues of adequate lighting, noise, proper ventilation and maintenance of filtering systems, overall cleanliness, temperature, exposure to dust, chemical, fumes or other particulates.
- **General Welfare** includes accessibility to quality drinking water, eye wash stations, ergonomics, repetitive movement, and overall cleanliness of the workplace.
- Occupation Types as each job description and responsibilities may vary, a thorough understanding of what each job description entails is necessary to appreciate all potential risks faced by individual employees.

## **Assessing Risk Potential**

All potential hazards should be graded according to the potential severity of an accident or injury ranging from:

- **Negligible** (Unlikely to cause accident or injury)
- Marginal or remote (May cause minor or minimal injury)
- Critical or reasonably probable (May result in serious injury or accident)
- **Disastrous** or very probable (Likely poses imminent accident or injury).

## **Premises Safety Checklist Essentials**

Performing a walk through and talking to a cross section of employees should be performed monthly. Your general inspection should include but not be restricted to:

- Working Environment adequate ventilation and personal protective devices for particulates such as fumes, dust, sprays, or excessive noise.
- · Electrical check all outlets, bulbs, cables, connectors and breakers, and emergency lighting.
- · **Building** check for frayed carpets, blocked exits, oily or wet floors, etc.

- **Building Exterior** Examine security fences, bin containers, condition of concrete and pavement, walkways, and hand rails, warning signs, and storage areas.
- **Hazardous Materials** Examine how flammable materials are stored and how caustic, acidic and cleansing materials are handled, properly labeled and used per regulatory requirements.
- · **Storage Facilities** Ensure overhead materials are properly stored and balanced and examine condition of all shelving.
- Fire Safety All fire exits should be clearly marked, with lit safety exits: examine fire extinguishing equipment and that fire procedures are well posted.
- · **Production Equipment** Confirm all pulleys, chains, gear covers, engines, motors, compressors, protective guards, belts, screens and pulleys, warning systems, emergency switches, mirrors and warning sirens are in good working condition.
- **Handling of Materials** Examine all conveyor belts, hoists, ropes and chains, and lifts. Ensure that weighted materials are being handled according to specs. All personnel should be using appropriate personal protective devices.
- · Sanitation Ensure that sanitary conditions are maintained in washrooms, water fountains, lunch facilities, and changing areas.
- **Personal Protection Devices** Check out that PPD's are in good condition, clean and are suitable for the various jobs required.

No doubt there are many other aspects of your business which need to be included in your checklist. Good communication with your personnel, management and regular inspections can many hazards and reduce your risk.