

Restroom Safety: Prevent Hazards Before They Happen

Monitoring a facility's restroom with a consistent inspection program can help reduce the likelihood that it becomes a hazard zone.

Slips and falls due to excess water on the bathroom floor are one of the most frequently reported claims. Overflowing sinks and toilets often lead to extensive repair and water extraction costs. One claim reported to Markel's Gymnastics Insurance Program involved an overflow that left two inches of water on the gym floor and estimated repair costs exceeding \$25,000.

Because bathrooms are concealed areas, they can be target locations for molestation and abuse, or hazing and bullying allegations. Additional hazards include poorly secured and maintained fixtures, such as sinks and lockers that can topple over on guests. Other incidents involve theft from unattended lockers.

The frequency of your inspections depends on how often the restrooms are used and the number of clients in your facility each day. The minimum standard should be every hour and more frequently for high volume usage. Inspections should be thorough. Check stalls, under fixtures, trash cans, and floor mats. If a stall is occupied, wait for it to become available so it can be checked. That way, nothing is overlooked.

Lockers should be checked to ensure they are securely fastened to the wall and free of defects. A broken locker door can lead to a variety of hazards. Secure or remove it as soon as possible.

Immediately take corrective action to resolve any hazard you find. If the floor is wet, post a conspicuous warning sign to advise guests of a potential hazardous condition.

Most importantly, keep your inspection process consistent and well documented should you need to refer to it later. Maintain this information with your other business records indefinitely.