



# PEP ON POINT

Building Stronger Communities Together

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# RISK SERVICES

## PROPER USE AND MAINTENANCE OF LADDERS

BY PEP RISK SERVICES TEAM

### PROPER USE AND MAINTENANCE OF LADDERS

Ensuring the safety of employees is a top priority at all times. As we frequently use ladders in our daily operations, it's imperative we follow proper procedures for their use and maintenance to prevent accidents and injuries. Here are some crucial guidelines to keep in mind:

#### TRAINING

Only trained and certified personnel should use ladders. Regular training sessions should be conducted to refresh knowledge and skills.

#### EQUIPMENT INSPECTION

Before each use, thoroughly inspect the ladder for damage, defects, or missing parts. Do not use damaged equipment.

#### PROPER SET UP

Always set up ladders on stable and level ground. Securely position ladders on a firm and even surface, following the manufacturer's instructions.

#### WEIGHT CAPACITY

Do not exceed the weight capacity of the ladder. Consider the weight of both the worker and any tools/materials being used.

#### THREE-POINT CONTACT

Maintain three points of contact (two hands and a foot or two feet and a hand) when climbing ladders. Do not carry heavy loads up the ladder.

#### STORAGE & MAINTENANCE

Store ladders in a dry place away from extreme temperatures. Regularly clean and inspect them for any signs of wear and tear.

#### REPORTING ISSUES

If you notice any problems with a ladder, report it immediately to ensure prompt repairs or replacements.

By following these guidelines, we can promote a safe working environment and reduce the risk of accidents. Remember, safety is non-negotiable.





## RISK SERVICES

# SIDEWALK/PAVEMENT LIABILITY

BY PEP RISK SERVICES TEAM

Sidewalks are essential to the infrastructure of public entities. They offer numerous benefits, including reducing congestion and pollution while enhancing the quality of life for residents. However, poorly maintained sidewalks can increase liability risks. To minimize the chances of injuries and potential lawsuits, it is important to consider the following measures.

### CONTROL MEASURES

Establish an ordinance that includes:

- Responsibilities of the entity and property owners
- Definitions of unacceptable conditions and nuisances
- Minimum sidewalk standards
- Reasonable timelines for repairs and removal of snow/ice
- Authorizations for repairs and snow/ice removal when not addressed
- Permitting requirements and inspection and repair processes

Regular inspections are crucial. Start with a comprehensive benchmark inspection (>5 years), then conduct periodic zone inspections focusing on detailed evaluations (measurements of slopes, cement separations, percentage of spalling, etc.). Utilize walking or driving audits, take photos/videos, and spot inspections based on citizen reports. Establish a process to ensure routine documented sidewalk inspections and develop training programs to ensure sidewalk inspectors know:

- What to look for regarding sidewalk defects
  - How to document the inspection
  - How to document the sidewalk condition at the time of the inspection
  - How to warn the public of sidewalk areas needing repairs
- How to ensure the inspection report is submitted and entered into the repair process

### CONCERNS/INJURIES

Create a formal procedure for reporting and addressing citizen concerns or injuries. Encourage easy reporting methods, document all concerns, and investigate promptly. If injuries are involved, consult with an attorney before making repairs.



### PRIORITIZATION

**Do not neglect maintenance issues. Allocate resources efficiently, addressing high-use areas and maintenance decisions based on urgency.**

### FIXING SIDEWALKS:

- **Temporary Solutions: Signage, cold patching, grinding, jacking (mud or polly), rubber pavers (near trees where roots are an issue)**
- **Long-Term Solutions: Replacement, overlays, grinding, jacking (mud or polly), rubber pavers (near trees where roots are an issue)**
- **Seasonal: Abutting property owners can handle snow/ice removal and maintenance of brush/weeds**

The most observed issue with sidewalks is the change in elevation and weed overgrowth. Public sidewalks should be inspected to ensure weeds are removed due to the trip hazard and to ensure there is not a change in elevation greater than ¼ inch without a bevel or up to ½ inch with a 2:1 bevel that extends the entire vertical surface.

It is critical that the inspections be done correctly; therefore, only trained individuals should be allowed to conduct them. Using a qualified contractor ensures that you will receive expert advice and professional repairs and installation.

# WORKPLACE SAFETY: GENERAL AWARENESS

BY PEP RISK SERVICES TEAM



## HOUSEKEEPING & COMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS

Maintaining good housekeeping in offices is essential for ensuring a safe work environment and should be standard practice. Simple work habits can help minimize injuries and reduce the risk of fires caused by untidy conditions. Items such as papers, file folders, take-out containers, rugs, and upholstered furniture are all combustible materials.

Keep personal workspaces, desks, and the general work area tidy and orderly. Here are some guidelines to follow for a clean and organized workspace:

- Always keep file, desk, and table drawers closed when not in use, and never open more than one file drawer at a time.
- Avoid stacking items on top of lockers, file cabinets, bookcases, or other high surfaces.
- Ensure that the blade on paper cutters is locked and secured when not in use.
- Store workstation supplies carefully to minimize the risk of accidental punctures or cuts.
- Place heavy items on the bottom shelf, lighter items on top, and keep frequently used items at a height between your shoulders and knees.
- Secure all cabinets that are 5 feet or higher to prevent tipping.

## SLIP, TRIP, AND FALL PREVENTION

Falls are the most common accident in the office. Here are some important safety tips to help prevent them:

- Be mindful of changes in elevation and variations in walking surfaces.
- Walk, don't run.
- Always use handrails on stairways.
- Always use a ladder or step stool; do not use chairs or climb on work surfaces or counters.
- Correct, remove, or report unsafe conditions, such as electrical cords, frayed carpets, worn stairs, and other hazards that could lead to slips, trips, or falls.
- Report any lighting issues immediately.
- Report any hazardous floor conditions as soon as you notice them.
- Always wipe up spills immediately and use "wet floor" signs if necessary.
- Never run cords, cables, or hoses across high-traffic areas. Use cord protectors to secure them and tape them down if needed.
- Always close desk or cabinet drawers after use.
- Do not open more than one drawer at a time, especially on tall cabinets that could tip over.
- Report any hazards you encounter in stairwells or other areas of the building.

## OFFICE ELECTRICAL SAFETY & FIRE SAFETY

Electricity is essential for the operations of a modern automated office; however, the electrical equipment used can be hazardous and may cause serious shock or burn injuries if not used or maintained properly.

### SPACE HEATERS

- Obtain approval for space heaters from your supervisor. Ensure they are approved for commercial use, such as meeting Underwriters Laboratories (UL) standards.
- Space heaters must be equipped with an automatic shut-off mechanism to turn off the heater if it is tipped over.
- Keep space heaters at least three feet away from flammable or combustible materials.
- Never plug a space heater into an extension cord.



## POWER CORDS

- Damaged or ungrounded cords pose a serious fire hazard and violate safety codes.
- Do not place electrical cords near radiators, space heaters, or other heat sources.
- Regularly examine electrical cords for signs of wear, fraying, or cracking.
- Never use a cord that feels hot or appears damaged in any way. Touching even a single exposed wire strand can result in an electric shock or burn.
- Do not overload electrical circuits.

## EXTENSION CORDS & DAISY CHAINS

- Use extension cords only on a temporary basis; unplug and safely store them after every use. If an extension cord is necessary, do not use it for more than 90 days.
- Avoid creating “daisy chains” (plugging extension cords together).
- Ensure that extension cords are rated for their intended use, whether indoor or outdoor, and they meet or exceed the power requirements of the appliance or tool being used.
- Do not plug more than one device into an extension cord.

## SPRINKLER HEADS

- Do not stack boxes or other items near sprinkler heads.
- Maintain an 18-inch clearance below sprinkler heads to ensure they function effectively.

## APPLIANCES & EQUIPMENT

- Keep appliances such as coffee pots, toaster ovens, and microwaves in working order, and inspect them for signs of wear, heat, or fraying cords.
- Plug all electrical equipment into appropriate wall receptacles.
- Only use guarded fans in work areas.

## ELECTRICAL PANELS

- Ensure that electrical panel doors are easily accessible and not blocked by furniture or clutter.
- Maintain a 36-inch clearance in front of all electrical panels.

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS IN THE OFFICE

Employees in office environments typically have limited exposure to potentially hazardous materials or substances. However, several products can be hazardous, so it is important to be aware of them and know how to handle them safely. Some of these products include toner used in copy machines and common cleaning agents.

Here are some basic safe work practices to follow:

- Read Safety Data Sheets (SDS) before using any products.
- Do not use a chemical product unless its primary or secondary container is properly labeled, and the label is readable.
- Follow all safety policies and procedures regarding the use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials.
- Report any hazardous conditions to a supervisor immediately.
- Use all required personal protective equipment whenever you are using or handling workplace chemicals.
- Request information and training from your supervisor if you are unsure about how to handle or use unfamiliar workplace chemicals.
- Store potentially poisonous solutions or items not intended for consumption in well-labeled containers and in a secure location within the office.
- Keep office cleaning supplies stored away from edible items on kitchen shelves.
- Store cleaning solvents and flammable liquids in appropriate containers or cabinets.

**BY OBSERVING THESE PRACTICES, YOU CAN HELP ENSURE A SAFER OFFICE ENVIRONMENT.**





# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOKS

## BEST PRACTICES

BY PEP RISK SERVICES TEAM

An employee handbook is a manual that outlines expectations for employees and what they can expect from the entity. Employee handbooks offer several benefits, including:

**Information for New Employees:** They provide essential details that help new hires integrate into the organization.

**Reference for Seasoned Employees:** Handbooks serve as a resource for current employees to review policies and procedures.

**Fair Treatment:** Handbooks ensure that all employees are treated equally in accordance with entity policies.

**Legal Protection:** They help protect the entity from potential lawsuits by clearly outlining policies and procedures.

**Standardization:** Handbooks explain employee expectations and the consequences for violating rules, promoting consistency within the organization.

**Time Savings for Management:** Documented rules and procedures save management time by reducing the need to repeatedly explain policies to multiple employees.

**Guidance for Human Resources:** They serve as a reference manual for HR teams and managers.

**Reduced Onboarding Time:** By clarifying job responsibilities and performance expectations, handbooks help new employees get up to speed more quickly.

**Legal Compliance:** They assist in adhering to federal and state employment laws and can serve as a legal defense in case of employee lawsuits.

**Policy Explanation:** Handbooks clarify the organization's stance on issues such as favoritism, discrimination, harassment, and provide information on how to report any violations concerning these matters.

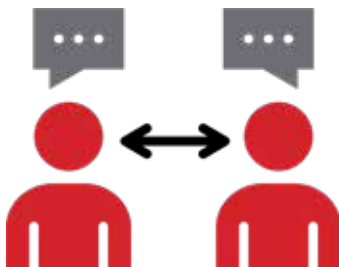
When developing an employee handbook, include only the policies and procedures that you actually follow.

Use simple language. The handbook should be reviewed annually to ensure that the policies and procedures remain relevant and up to date, particularly since laws can



and straightforward. The handbook should be reviewed annually to ensure that procedures remain to date, particularly change.

Additionally, have your handbook reviewed by an employment law attorney to ensure compliance with various employment laws that may apply to the entity.





The following is a list of suggested sections for your employee handbook:

**Introduction:** Welcome message, at-will employment statement, mission, vision, etc.

**Employment Policies:** ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity), termination, promotion, etc.

**Workplace Conduct:** Ethics, complaint procedures, disciplinary action, harassment policy, drug-free workplace policy, etc.

**Employee Benefits:** Details of the employer-provided benefits package, COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act), wellness programs, etc.

**Time Away from Work:** Policies regarding PTO (Paid Time Off), flextime, illness, lunch and breaks, jury duty, FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act), bereavement, vacation, voting, etc.

**Information & Office Security:** Emergency action plans, facility access procedures, visitor policies, computer usage, email, voicemail, cell phone policies, etc.

**General Practices:** Anti-discrimination policies, attendance requirements, background checks, usage of entity vehicles, entity credit cards, business expenses, conflict of interest guidelines, direct deposit instructions, dress code, employee fraternization policies, employee referral programs, improper payment or gifts, media relations, open door policy, performance evaluations, overtime policies, personnel records maintenance, etc.

**Appendix:** Required forms for the policies mentioned previously, acknowledgments that require signatures, expense report forms, etc.

If you need a new employee handbook or want to update your existing one, Zywave simplifies the process. To get started, visit Publications: [The Guide](#), linked on the pool's website and sign up or login. From there, click on the Zywave link at the top and click on "Handbooks" in the left navigation pane. Launch the Employee Handbook Builder, a user-friendly tool that allows you to easily create a comprehensive employee handbook or individual policies. **This benefit is included with your PEP membership at no additional cost.**

Next, review the list of highly recommended, and discretionary policies to include in your handbook, or choose the individual policy you wish to create. The policies are tailored to specific states and cover various topics, including anti-harassment, overtime, drug-free workplace, and employee benefits. Once you've completed your handbook or policy, you (or your legal counsel, as recommended by PEP) will have the opportunity to review and edit it as often as necessary.

**Consult your Risk Services Specialist at (866) 907-3776 with any questions you may have or to request an onsite visit.**

# 'MEMBER-FOCUSED' PEP BENEFITS

## THE GUIDE

We are delighted to introduce our brand-new resource website, **The Guide**. This upgrade is designed to make your online experience even better, featuring a wonderful mix of fresh materials along with your favorite resources.

Getting started is easy—just create a new account to access all your member materials. Don't worry; we've got you covered with plenty of walkthroughs, tutorials, and helpful tips to make the process smooth and simple.

We are confident that you will love the new enhancements, and we can't wait for you to explore everything that The Guide has to offer!



## CYBERSECURITY TIP

### SECURE YOUR ENTITY DURING TAX SEASON

It's tax season once again. Staying vigilant during tax season is crucial for protecting your entity from cybercriminals. By understanding common scams, implementing strong security measures, and educating employees, you can significantly reduce your risk of falling victim to tax-related fraud.

#### REMEMBER THESE KEY STRATEGIES:

1. **Be skeptical of unexpected communications claiming to be from the IRS**
2. **Use two-factor authentication for all important accounts**
3. **Implement strong, complex passwords or passwordless authentication**
4. **Regularly monitor your financial accounts for suspicious activity**
5. **Educate employees about cybersecurity best practices**

By following these guidelines and staying informed about the latest cybersecurity threats, you can ensure a more secure tax season for your entity.



## DETECT, RESPOND, AND PREVENT

### WITH EDR, MDR, AND XDR SOLUTIONS

BY PEP CYBER RISK SERVICES TEAM

As cyber threats evolve in complexity, entities face mounting pressure to secure their networks, endpoints, and sensitive data. Cybersecurity solutions like **Endpoint Detection and Response (EDR)**, **Managed Detection and Response (MDR)**, and **Extended Detection and Response (XDR)** provide entities with protection, detection, and remediation capabilities. Each offers unique benefits, and when combined, they form a comprehensive defense strategy against more sophisticated cyberattacks. In today's threat landscape, leveraging these technologies isn't just beneficial, it's essential for protecting critical assets and maintaining business continuity.

**EDR SOLUTIONS** focus on detecting and responding to threats at the endpoint level, such as laptops, desktops, and servers. These solutions provide granular visibility and real-time threat detection at the endpoints. EDR is a critical component of any cybersecurity strategy, offering endpoint-level defense that complements broader detection and response tools like XDR. Key benefits are:

- **Real-Time Threat Detection:** EDR continuously monitors endpoints for suspicious behavior, ensuring threats are identified and addressed quickly.
- **Granular Visibility:** Security teams gain insights into endpoint activity, allowing for detailed forensic analysis and root cause investigations.
- **Automated Threat Remediation:** Many EDR tools include automated responses to contain and eliminate threats, such as isolating infected devices from the network.
- **Protection Against Advanced Threats:** EDR is effective against ransomware, zero-day attacks, and advanced persistent threats (APTs), providing an additional layer of endpoint security.

**MDR SERVICES** provide organizations with outsourced, 24/7 security monitoring, threat detection, and incident response. This solution is managed by cybersecurity subject matter experts who act as an extension of an entity's internal security team. MDR is particularly beneficial for small to mid-sized entities or those without dedicated security teams, providing peace of mind and robust protection. Key benefits are:

- **Expertise and Support:** MDR providers deliver specialized knowledge and experience, making them particularly valuable for entities with limited internal resources.
- **Continuous Monitoring:** Threats don't wait for business hours. MDR ensures 24/7 vigilance, identifying and mitigating risks in real time.
- **Rapid Threat Response:** MDR teams act quickly to contain and resolve threats, minimizing downtime and potential damage.
- **Cost-Effective:** Instead of hiring and training an in-house team, entities can leverage MDR services at a much lower cost.

**XDR** is a unified security solution that integrates multiple security products into a single platform, improving visibility, correlation, and response across an entity's entire infrastructure. XDR is ideal for entities looking for a proactive, unified approach to cybersecurity that spans their entire IT platform. Key benefits are:

- **Holistic Threat Visibility:** XDR provides a centralized view of data from endpoints, networks, emails, and cloud environments. This holistic approach enables security teams to detect threats that might be missed by siloed tools.
- **Enhanced Threat Correlation:** By aggregating and analyzing data from multiple sources, XDR identifies patterns and relationships between seemingly unrelated events, providing better context for incident investigation.
- **Streamlined Response:** Automated workflows and integrated response capabilities reduce the time needed to detect, investigate, and remediate threats.
- **Resource Efficiency:** By consolidating multiple tools into one platform, XDR minimizes complexity and reduces the burden on security teams, allowing them to focus on more high-priority threats.

For more information on cybersecurity, contact your PEP Cyber Risk Services Advisor, Eric Adonteng at 240-808-9278 or email [eric.adonteng@persopool.com](mailto:eric.adonteng@persopool.com).

# SAFE PARKING AND STORAGE OF VEHICLES

BY PEP RISK SERVICES TEAM

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Ensuring safe parking and proper storage of vehicles is essential to maintaining a secure transportation environment and protecting both the vehicles and personnel. As entities manage a fleet of vehicles for various transport operations, it is important to adhere to safety guidelines for parking and storing vehicles correctly. Here are key practices:

### DESIGNATED PARKING AREAS

Designate specific parking areas for different types of vehicles to ensure organized parking and easy access for maintenance and inspection.

### SECURE PARKING FACILITIES

Park vehicles in secure facilities equipped with adequate lighting, surveillance cameras, and controlled access to prevent theft and vandalism.

### PROPERLY PARK VEHICLES

Ensure vehicles are parked in designated spaces with sufficient clearance around them to avoid obstruction of emergency exits and walkways.

### UTILIZE WHEEL CHOCKS

Use wheel chocks when parking on inclines or uneven surfaces to prevent unintended movement of the vehicle.

### HANDBRAKE AND GEAR SHIFT

To prevent accidental rolling, engage the handbrake and shift vehicles into the park or neutral position before turning off the engine.



**PARKING** 

### VEHICLE INSPECTION

Conduct routine inspections of parked vehicles for leaks, tire pressure, fluid levels, and any signs of damage or malfunction.

### PROHIBITED PARKING AREAS

Clearly mark and restrict parking in areas designated as no-parking zones, such as fire lanes, emergency exits, and loading/unloading areas.

### STORING HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

If storing vehicles with hazardous materials, ensure compliance with regulations for proper containment, labeling, and storage practices.

### BATTERY MAINTENANCE

Disconnect the battery or use a maintenance charger for long-term storage to prevent battery drain and ensure readiness for use.

### EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Display emergency contact information inside each vehicle for quick access in case of emergencies or maintenance needs.

By following these safety practices for parking and storage of vehicles, you can maintain a secure transportation fleet and contribute to overall safety in your operations. Your attention to these guidelines is crucial for the well-being of your vehicles and personnel.



# CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF PEP CALENDARS

# 10 YEARS

Thank you PEP Members for submitting your entity's photos throughout the years. Each year we are blown away with the spectacular views from your backyards. We look forward to continuing this PEP tradition and cannot wait to see the upcoming year's submissions!



## COVERS THROUGH THE YEARS

- 2016 – Warren City Health Department
- 2017 – Wood County Park District
- 2018 – Terrence Peck and Columbus & Franklin County Metro Parks
- 2019 – Canton City Health Department, Patty McConnell
- 2020 – Wood County Park District, Columbus & Franklin County Metro Parks, Fulton County Agricultural Society

- 2021 – Wood County Park District
- 2022 – Canton City Health Department, Patty McConnell
- 2023 – Canton City Health Department, Patty McConnell
- 2024 – Canton City Health Department, Patty McConnell
- 2025 – Canton City Health Department, Patty McConnell



