

## PARKING LOT BEST PRACTICES

Maintaining a safe parking lot is an often-overlooked part of an agency's risk management plan. A well-maintained parking lot helps prevent injuries and minimize liabilities and contributes to a positive resident experience, a strong reputation, and improved employee morale. While safety efforts focus on the interior of buildings, it is equally essential to ensure parking lots are well-kept and secure. This bulletin discusses the importance of parking lot safety, highlights common risks, and offers practical tips for creating a safe parking lot environment.

National Safety Council, "tens of thousands of crashes in parking lots result in thousands of injuries and hundreds of deaths yearly."

A safe parking lot is important for the following reasons:

- **Enhancing Community Experience** – A safe and well-maintained parking lot can improve a user's overall experience, setting a positive tone for their visit and improving an agency's reputation.
- **Minimizing Legal Risks** – A safe, hazard-free parking lot reduces the risk of accidents and injuries, which lowers the chances of costly lawsuits and liability claims.
- **Improving Employee Safety and Satisfaction** – A well-maintained parking lot can allow employees to feel safe, improve their impression of their workplace, and strengthen their overall satisfaction.
- **Reducing Crime** – Adequately lit and monitored parking lots can reduce theft, vandalism, and other crimes.

Risks associated with parking lots include accidents with people or objects, criminal activities, weather-related hazards, and drips or falls. To mitigate risks, leaders should consider the following measures to ensure a safe parking environment:

- **Establish Clear Traffic Flow Systems** – Signage and markings direct traffic and designate emergency lanes, pedestrian crosswalks, bike lanes, entrances, exits, slippery areas, and accessible parking spots to reduce confusion and improve safety.
- **Enhance Lighting** – Bright lights (e.g., LED) can improve visibility and deter criminal activities, especially in areas with a history of incidents.
- **Install Panic Buttons and Emergency Phones** – Phones and panic buttons can add a layer of security.
- **Conduct Regular Inspections and Maintenance** – Conducting periodic parking lot surveys and repairing potholes, cracks, and other hazards can keep the parking lot in optimal condition. Your agency can utilize the [Facility Hazard Identification Inspection – Parking Lot](#) to document the inspections.
- **Utilize Security Measures and Access Controls** – Surveillance cameras and security personnel enable monitoring of the area, and gates or fences can control lot access and enhance safety.
- **Control Speed and Address Blind Spots** – Speed bumps or posted speed limits can help reduce vehicular speed. Mirrors may be hung to improve visibility if blind spots exist.
- **Ensure Proper Drainage and Snow Removal** – Drainage and snow removal procedures can prevent water, ice, and snow from accumulating in lots. Properly using ice melt can also improve traction on slippery surfaces. Maintaining a [Snow Removal and Salting Log](#) is important to protect against lawsuits.
- **Educate Visitors** – Post safety tips and guidelines in visible areas, encouraging visitors to be aware of their surroundings and avoid distractions like cell phone use and other distractions while driving and walking.
- **Train Employees** – Periodically remind employees of parking lot safety, including wearing nonslip footwear, avoiding headphone use, reporting suspicious activity, locking cars, keeping valuables hidden, and using the buddy system if leaving after dark.