

C-STORE CONNECTION

Newsletter by **DFW Alcohol Permits**

Preparing an Inspection and Mystery Shop Checklist

Mystery shoppers and inspections – they can be two of the most stressful things to sort out as a convenience store and/or gas station owner. But, if you're prepared, you don't have to feel as nervous about what needs to be done.

A checklist can go a long way when you're trying to keep everyone on the same page regarding the cleanliness of your store and the level of customer service your team offers. But, how do you build a checklist that is going to cover everything that your team needs to accomplish? Let's take a look at what steps you can take when you start building your own checklist for these purposes.

Before You Make Your Checklist:

- **Understand your state and local laws.** State and local laws are going to be one of the main things that guide the inspection end of your checklist. As you get ready to put your checklist together, be sure that you understand what

laws are going to apply to your store.

- **Do research regarding what mystery shoppers look for.** Thankfully, the internet is a great resource, and you can learn a lot about mys-

tery shoppers and what they seek out. Many times, they are looking for store cleanliness, high end customer service, and affordable costs.

- **Talk with an inspector to get recommendations.** If you have a connection with an inspector or you can talk to your local city inspection board, you'll be able to get recommendations that can assist you in.
- **Look at past performance to inform your checklist.** Do you have past inspection papers or mystery shopper results? Utilize those in order to make your list as well. It'll help you to see where your store has had issues in the past so that you can address those things.

Making Your Checklist:

- **More is better:** You can always have too little on your inspection checklist – but you can never have too much. The more that you have on your checklist, the easier it will be for your employees to follow everything on it.
- **Make daily, weekly, and monthly goals:** Daily, weekly, and monthly goals can help to break everything up into reasonable chunks, and it allows your team to feel less overwhelmed by the expectations that you're setting.
- **Use a template:** There are all sorts of templates available for inspection checklists. If you're affiliated with a major gas station or convenience store chain, they likely also have checklists that you can use as a template.
- **Have a mentor or colleague look over**

it: Do you have a business mentor or colleague that you collaborate with? Have them look over your drafts so that you can get recommendations and changes based on their advice.

Using Your Checklist:

- **Train managers and employees how to use the checklist.** Work with your team to make sure that they know what they're looking for and how to execute things in a proper manner. This can reduce their anxiety about following the checklist while also ensuring that things are being done correctly.
- **Come in and inspect the store yourself.** Come in for surprise inspections and use the checklist to go over everything that needs to be done. This can help you to get a better idea of what your team has accomplished already and what still needs to be done.
- **Be willing to make changes based on future results.** After every inspection or mystery shopper result, take some time to look at the results. If you're getting perfect or close to perfect scores, then your checklist is effective and helpful. If you're still missing the mark, take the information provided and make relevant changes. It'll make your list more conclusive and helpful.

What About Customer Service?

All of these tips work well when you're trying to make sure that you have a convenience store that is clean, easy to navigate, and up to date. But, when it comes to customer service, you need to make some additional considerations. It may even require you to have a separate checklist. Here are

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Things to consider about SOCIAL MEDIA:

1. Do not advertise your happy marriage on social media.
2. Do not advertise pregnancy on social media.
3. Do not advertise your expensive buys on social media.
4. Do not advertise your kids' achievements on social media.
5. Do not advertise all your events on social media.



Please understand this:

1. Many of the nice comments are just fake.
2. You are probably attracting jealous people into your life.
3. You don't know who is saving your pictures and checking your updates.
4. Being famous could become vulnerable.
5. It may end up ruining your life, marriage, family and career.

(Continued from page 1)

some considerations you want to make about your customer service checklist.

- Put together a list of customer service employee traits, and start building your checklist off of those.
- Talk through a typical customer interaction in your mind when building your checklist. It will help you to
- When you complete the checklist, be sure to use your checklist when you train employees.
- Post your checklist by your register and in other locations where your

employees can regularly see it. This will help to engrain those values in their mind.

It will take some time and effort to put together a solid checklist, but the results are worth the time you put into it. You'll find that your mystery shop results are much higher and that even surprise inspections end up going better. {End}

Did You Know?

After his life was saved by 3.4 gallons of blood, James Harrison donated blood a record 1,000 times, saving over 2.4 million people, since his blood has a rare antibody preventing Rhesus disease.

“Always remember you are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.”



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Random Tip:

If you carry SNAP Retailer's permit then a good information for training can be accessed by clicking "[here](https://www.fns.usda.gov/retailer/training)" or you can copy and paste the following link.

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/retailer/training>

(If you have a tip to share with the readers of this newsletter, you are welcome to share.)

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