BAR & RESTAURANT RISK MANAGEMENT MANUAL

Safety Manual & Employee Handbook • Master Edition 2026

Prepared by

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We serve 50+ admitted and E&S surplus lines markets to find you the best coverage at the best price.

Coverage Areas Addressed In This Manual:

General Liability • Liquor Liability • Property • Assault & Battery • Commercial Auto
Workers' Compensation • Employment Practices Liability • Commercial Umbrella

Section 1: Introduction & How to Use This Manual

Welcome to the Bar & Restaurant Risk Management Manual — the most comprehensive loss control resource available for hospitality business owners. This master document has been developed using best practices from top hospitality insurance carriers and is designed to serve as both an operational guide and a compliance reference for your entire team.

1.1 Purpose of This Manual

- Reduce insurance claims and keep your premiums manageable
- Train employees to recognize and prevent common risks
- Document your commitment to safety for underwriting purposes
- Protect your business, employees, and guests from harm
- Provide checklists, logs, and protocols required by many carriers

1.2 How Insurance Carriers Use This Information

Insurance underwriters evaluate your risk based on your operations, claims history, and — increasingly — your documented safety programs. A bar or restaurant with written protocols, signed training logs, and completed inspection checklists is viewed as a far better risk than one without. This manual helps you build that evidence file.

1.3 Coverage Lines Explained

Coverage Line	What It Protects
General Liability	Bodily injury or property damage to third parties on your premises or caused by your operations
Liquor Liability	Claims arising from serving alcohol to intoxicated guests who then cause injury or damage
Property	Your building, equipment, inventory, and business personal property from fire, theft, and covered perils

Coverage Line	What It Protects
Assault & Battery	Fights, altercations, and physical confrontations on your premises — often excluded from GL
Commercial Auto	Vehicles used in business operations including delivery, catering, and staff transport
Workers' Compensation	Medical bills and lost wages for employees injured on the job — required by law in most states
Employment Practices Liability	Wrongful termination, discrimination, harassment, and wage claims by current or former employees
Commercial Umbrella	Excess liability above your primary policy limits for catastrophic claims

Section 2: Employee Onboarding & Orientation Checklist

Every new employee must complete the following onboarding steps before beginning work. A signed copy of this checklist must be retained in the employee's personnel file. Workers' Compensation and Employment Practices Liability (EPLI) underwriters frequently request evidence of onboarding documentation.

2.1 Pre-Employment Requirements

✓	Pre-Employment Item	Notes / Date
■	I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification completed and filed	Notes / Initials
■	W-4 Federal Tax Withholding form completed	Notes / Initials
■	State tax withholding form completed	Notes / Initials
■	Valid government-issued ID verified and copied	Notes / Initials
■	Food Handler's Permit / Food Handler Card obtained (if required by state)	Notes / Initials
■	TIPS / ServSafe Alcohol certification verified (bar/server staff)	Notes / Initials
■	Background check authorization signed and check completed	Notes / Initials
■	Driver's license verified (for any driving duties)	Notes / Initials
■	MVR (Motor Vehicle Report) obtained for drivers	Notes / Initials
■	Drug screening consent signed and test completed (if policy requires)	Notes / Initials
■	Emergency contact information form completed	Notes / Initials
■	Direct deposit authorization or pay method elected	Notes / Initials

2.2 Day-One Orientation Checklist

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✓	Orientation Item	Trainer Initials
■	Employee Handbook received and reviewed	Notes / Initials
■	Sexual harassment / anti-discrimination policy signed	Notes / Initials
■	At-will employment acknowledgment signed	Notes / Initials
■	Social media policy reviewed and signed	Notes / Initials
■	Drug & alcohol-free workplace policy signed	Notes / Initials
■	Cell phone / personal device policy reviewed	Notes / Initials
■	Uniform and appearance standards reviewed	Notes / Initials
■	Shift scheduling and time-off request procedures reviewed	Notes / Initials
■	Disciplinary procedure and progressive discipline policy explained	Notes / Initials
■	Tip reporting policy and IRS obligations explained	Notes / Initials
■	Wage & hour laws reviewed (overtime, breaks per state law)	Notes / Initials
■	Complaint / grievance reporting procedure explained	Notes / Initials
■	Workers' Compensation reporting procedure explained	Notes / Initials
■	Emergency evacuation plan reviewed and route walked	Notes / Initials
■	First aid kit locations identified	Notes / Initials
■	AED (Automated External Defibrillator) location and basic use reviewed	Notes / Initials
■	Fire extinguisher locations and basic use demonstrated	Notes / Initials
■	Slip, trip and fall prevention protocols reviewed	Notes / Initials
■	Food safety and sanitation procedures reviewed	Notes / Initials
■	Alcohol service policy reviewed (if applicable)	Notes / Initials
■	Violence prevention and de-escalation policy reviewed	Notes / Initials
■	Security camera locations identified	Notes / Initials
■	Incident / accident report procedure explained	Notes / Initials
■	POS system / cash handling procedures trained	Notes / Initials

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✓	Orientation Item	Trainer Initials
■	Kitchen safety orientation completed (kitchen staff only)	Notes / Initials

Employee Signature: _________________________________ Date: ______________
Manager / Trainer Signature: ________________________ Date: ______________

Section 3: Kitchen Safety Protocols

3.1 Knife & Cutting Safety

Cuts and lacerations are the most frequent kitchen injuries and a leading driver of Workers' Compensation claims. The following protocols are mandatory for all kitchen personnel.

3.1a Knife Handling Rules

- Always cut away from the body on a stable, non-slip cutting board
- Use the proper knife for the task — never improvise
- Keep knives sharp; dull blades require more pressure and cause more injuries
- Never leave a knife submerged in a sink — always wash and dry immediately
- Always announce 'sharp' when carrying a knife past a coworker
- Store knives in a knife block, magnetic strip, or blade guard — never loose in a drawer
- If a knife falls, step back and let it drop — never try to catch it

3.1b Cut-Resistant Glove Policy

- Cut-resistant gloves required for mandoline slicer, meat slicer, and oyster shucking
- Gloves must be inspected for tears before each use
- Gloves are not a substitute for proper knife technique

3.2 Burns & Scalds Prevention

- Assume all pots, pans, and surfaces near the range are hot
- Use dry oven mitts only — wet mitts conduct heat and cause steam burns
- Always announce 'hot behind' or 'hot side' when carrying hot items through the kitchen
- Tilt lids away from your body when uncovering steam — let vapor escape safely
- Never leave fryer oil unattended and maintain oil at manufacturer-recommended temperatures
- Keep a Class K fire extinguisher within reach of all cooking equipment
- Do not use water on grease fires — smother with a lid or use Class K extinguisher
- Treat all burns immediately with cool (not cold) water for at least 10 minutes

3.3 Kitchen Fire Prevention & Control

PREVENTION	RESPONSE
Clean hood filters weekly (minimum) Clean exhaust ducts quarterly Keep range clean of grease buildup daily Inspect fire suppression system semi-annually Log all maintenance inspections Never store combustibles near heat sources	Evacuate all guests and employees Call 911 immediately Pull fire suppression system if safe to do so Close kitchen doors to contain fire Never use water on grease fires Meet at designated assembly point

3.4 Slips, Trips & Falls — Kitchen

- Non-slip footwear required for ALL kitchen personnel — enforce strictly
- Clean spills immediately; place wet floor cones whenever mopping
- Anti-fatigue mats must be kept flat and dry; replace cracked or curled mats immediately
- Floor drains must be kept clear and inspected daily
- Walkways between stations must never be obstructed
- No running in the kitchen under any circumstances

- Adequate lighting in all food preparation, storage, and dishwashing areas

3.5 Food Safety & Sanitation — Insurance Relevance

Foodborne illness claims can trigger General Liability losses and reputational damage. These protocols protect your guests and your policy.

- Maintain HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points) plan on file
- Log refrigeration temperatures twice daily — keep logs for a minimum of 90 days
- All employees must wash hands for 20 seconds with soap after handling raw protein, using the restroom, or handling garbage
- No bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat foods — use gloves or utensils
- Label and date all food items; follow FIFO (First In, First Out) rotation
- Separate raw proteins from ready-to-eat foods in storage — color-coded cutting boards required
- Document all cleaning and sanitizing procedures in a cleaning log

3.6 Kitchen Equipment Safety

Equipment	Key Safety Requirements
Deep Fryer	Never fill above max line; check for water in oil before heating; use long-handled baskets; keep Class K extinguisher within 30 feet
Meat Slicer	Zero-blade position before cleaning; cut-resistant gloves required; never leave unattended when powered on
Commercial Mixer	Keep guard in place; never reach into bowl while running; power off before scraping
Ovens / Ranges	Daily burner inspection; gas line leak check quarterly; never store items in oven
Walk-In Cooler/Freezer	Interior emergency release required by code; check daily; never lock from outside with person inside
Dishwasher / Sanitizer	Check chemical concentrations daily; proper ventilation required; log sanitizer readings

Section 4: Slip, Trip & Fall Prevention Program

Slips, trips, and falls are the number-one source of General Liability claims in bars and restaurants and a leading cause of Workers' Compensation claims. Insurance carriers evaluate your slip/fall prevention program when underwriting your account. A documented, enforced program can significantly improve your coverage terms.

4.1 Facility Hazard Assessment Map

Complete a written hazard assessment of your entire facility quarterly. Identify every area with elevated slip/fall risk and document the controls in place:

Location	Primary Hazard	Control Measure	Inspection Frequency
Bar area	Spilled liquids on tile or rubber mats	Non-slip mats; immediate spill protocol; adequate lighting	Daily
Dining room	Uneven flooring, chair legs, wet umbrellas	Floor inspection pre-service; wet floor cones; cable management	Pre-shift
Restrooms	Wet tile near sinks and urinals	Anti-slip floor treatment; exhaust fans; mop every 30 min during peak	Weekly

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Location	Primary Hazard	Control Measure	Inspection Frequency
Entry/Exit	Rain water tracked in; threshold transitions	Heavy-duty absorbent mats; non-slip threshold strips; umbrella stand	Weekly
Parking lot	Ice, uneven pavement, poor lighting	Lighting audit; deice protocol; pothole repair; painted paths	Weekly
Outdoor patio	Slippery deck or pavers when wet	Textured coatings; drain maintenance; furniture placed clear of paths	Weekly
Walk-in cooler	Condensation on floor	Anti-slip coating; door seal maintenance; condensate drain inspection	Weekly
Loading dock	Wet, greasy, or uneven surface	Non-slip coating; adequate lighting; dock leveler inspection	Weekly

4.2 Daily Pre-Opening Walkthrough Log

A designated manager must complete and sign this log before opening each day:

✓	Inspection Item	Action Taken / Initials
■	All floor mats in place and flat; no curled edges or tears	Notes / Initials
■	Entry mats clean and absorbent; replaced if saturated	Notes / Initials
■	All flooring surfaces inspected for wet spots, damage, or hazards	Notes / Initials
■	Bar rubber mats inspected and cleaned	Notes / Initials
■	Kitchen floor clean and dry; anti-fatigue mats in place	Notes / Initials
■	Walk-in cooler floor dry and drain clear	Notes / Initials
■	Restroom floors clean and dry; exhaust fans operating	Notes / Initials
■	All stairways clear of obstructions; handrails secure	Notes / Initials
■	Parking lot inspected for ice, standing water, or hazards	Notes / Initials
■	Outdoor lighting functional and adequate	Notes / Initials
■	Signage available: wet floor cones, caution signs at hand	Notes / Initials
■	First aid kit stocked and accessible	Notes / Initials
■	Fire extinguishers in place and not obstructed	Notes / Initials
■	All emergency exits clear and unlocked	Notes / Initials
■	AED in place and indicator light green	Notes / Initials

Manager Signature: ________________________________ **Date:** ____________ **Time:** __________

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Section 5: Responsible Alcohol Service & Liquor Liability

LIQUOR LIABILITY IS ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT EXPOSURES FOR BARS & RESTAURANTS. DOCUMENTED TRAINING IS ESSENTIAL.

Dram shop laws in Missouri, Kansas, and most states hold alcohol licensees responsible for injuries or damages caused by intoxicated patrons to whom they served alcohol. A single liquor liability claim can easily reach six or seven figures. Your liquor liability policy requires — and your carrier will verify — that you have documented alcohol service training in place.

5.1 Required Certifications

Certification	Description	Who Must Have It
TIPS (Training for Intervention Procedures)	Industry-standard alcohol service training covering signs of intoxication, ID verification, and refusal procedures	All bar staff, servers, and managers
ServSafe Alcohol	National Restaurant Association program covering responsible service, intervention, and legal liability	Recommended for managers; required by some carriers
State-Specific License	Missouri or Kansas state-required server training (check current state law for your license type)	Verify with your state liquor control board
TABC / Local	If operating near state borders or in multi-jurisdiction markets	As applicable

5.2 Checking Identification — Protocol

- Always check ID for anyone who appears under 35 years old — err on the side of caution
- Accept only government-issued IDs: driver's license, state ID, passport, or military ID
- Check expiration date — expired IDs are not valid
- Examine the ID under lighting: check for tampering, peeling, or inconsistencies
- Compare photo, height, weight, and hair color to the guest — ask a question only the real person would know if uncertain
- If the ID appears fake or you are unsure — refuse service. You will not be penalized for a reasonable refusal; you can be penalized for serving a minor
- Document all refused sales in a refusal log (date, time, description of ID, reason for refusal, staff name)

5.3 Recognizing Signs of Intoxication

Early Signs	Moderate Signs	Cut-Off Indicators
Becoming louder or more talkative Flushed face or skin Repeated topics or stories More animated gestures	Slurred speech Glassy or bloodshot eyes Difficulty with balance Slower reactions Increasing emotional swings	Inability to stand unassisted Aggressive or combative behavior Unresponsive or nearly unconscious Vomiting or near vomiting Loss of coordination

5.4 How to Refuse Service — Script & Protocol

SUGGESTED REFUSAL SCRIPT ***"I appreciate you being here tonight. For your safety and the safety of others, I'm not able to serve you any more alcohol this evening. Can I get you some water or a bite to eat? I can also call a ride for you — Uber and Lyft are both quick from here."*** **KEY PRINCIPLES: Never argue with an intoxicated guest. Speak quietly, calmly, and without condescension. Offer alternatives. Never physically restrain. Alert a manager immediately if the guest becomes aggressive. Document the interaction in the incident log.**

5.5 Safe Ride Home Program

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- Post rideshare app instructions (Uber/Lyft/Waymo) visibly at the bar and near the exit
- Keep a list of local taxi companies at the host stand
- Train staff to offer to call a ride on behalf of any guest who appears impaired
- Never allow an obviously intoxicated guest to drive away unassisted — call law enforcement if necessary to prevent injury
- Document all incidents in which intoxicated guests were assisted with transportation

5.6 Alcohol Service Incident Log (Template)

Date	Time	Server	Guest Description	Incident / Action Taken

5.7 Real-World Liquor Liability Claim Examples

Dram shop verdicts are among the largest in hospitality insurance. These cases illustrate why documented alcohol service training is your most important defense.

Claim Scenario	Outcome / Settlement Range	Loss Control Lesson
Visibly intoxicated patron served three more rounds, drives home, kills another driver	**$2.1 million — dram shop verdict; policy limit exhausted; owner sued personally**	*Refusal log, server training records, and TIPS certification are your primary defenses*
Guest over-served at bachelorette party, falls from bar stool — traumatic brain injury	**$780,000 settlement — liability split between bar and guest**	*Written cutoff policy + management oversight of large party tabs = documented due diligence*
Minor served alcohol with altered ID — later involved in vehicle accident	**$450,000 — bar found liable despite fake ID presented**	*ID scanners + document all ID checks + post all refusals in incident log immediately*
Guest removed for intoxication walks to next bar, assaults stranger outside	**$190,000 — original bar named in suit for over-service**	*Document cutoff decision + offer safe ride + log departure condition of guest*
Server continues serving guest after manager instructed cutoff	**$560,000 — employer vicariously liable for server's actions**	*Written management authority to cut off + signed server policy acknowledgment on file*

Section 6: Assault & Battery Prevention & Security Protocols

ASSAULT & BATTERY IS FREQUENTLY EXCLUDED FROM STANDARD GENERAL LIABILITY — VERIFY YOUR COVERAGE WITH YOUR AGENT

Physical altercations between guests — or between staff and guests — are one of the most expensive and difficult claims to manage in the bar and restaurant industry. Assault & Battery (A&B) coverage is often provided by endorsement or a separate policy. Your premium and availability of coverage depends heavily on your documented security protocols.

6.1 Security Personnel Requirements

- Security staff must be licensed per Missouri/Kansas private security regulations
- Verify all security contractor certificates of insurance — minimum $1M GL and $500K A&B
- Security staff must complete de-escalation training annually
- Written post orders must be maintained for each security position
- Security incident reports must be completed for every incident within 24 hours
- All security staff must know and follow your use-of-force policy
- Security staff must never use excessive force — document your use-of-force policy

6.2 Physical Security Measures

Control	Standard / Best Practice
CCTV Cameras	Cover all entrances, exits, bar areas, parking lot, and cash registers. Retain footage minimum 30 days. Notify guests via posted signage.
Lighting	Maintain adequate lighting inside and in the parking area. Dark corners create risk. Add motion-activated exterior lighting.
Capacity Control	Never exceed posted fire code occupancy. Overcrowding increases fight risk and creates fire and liability exposure.
Bag / Weapon Screening	Consider metal detector wands for late-night operations. Implement clear bag policy. Post rules at entrance.
Exit Control	Control egress — funnel departing guests through monitored exits. Prevent large groups congregating just outside.
Layout Design	Eliminate blind spots and dead ends. Position bar so staff can see the entire room. Secure areas where fights most occur.

6.3 De-Escalation Training — Core Concepts

- Identify aggression early — watch body language, voices raised, confrontational posturing
- Approach calmly with open hands — never touch an agitated guest
- Use a calm, low voice — never shout or match the guest's intensity
- Validate the guest's feelings without agreeing with their behavior
- Offer choices and alternatives — 'Let me get you some water / fresh air / move you to a quieter table'
- If de-escalation fails, separate the parties and ask the aggressor to leave
- Call 911 immediately if physical violence begins or is imminent — do not attempt to physically stop a fight without training
- Never allow staff to engage in physical fights — evacuate nearby guests instead
- Document every incident within 24 hours in the written incident log

6.4 Incident Report Form

INCIDENT / SECURITY REPORT Date: ____________ Time: ____________ Location: _______________________ Report #: _________ Type of Incident: ■ Fight ■ Verbal Altercation ■ Intoxicated Guest ■ Theft ■ Injury ■ Other: __________ Persons Involved (name/description): ____ Witnesses: ____ Police Called? ■ Yes ■ No Report Number: ___________________ Description of Incident: ____ ____ ____ Action Taken: ____ ____ Staff Member Completing Report: _________________________ Title: _____________ Signature: ____________ Manager Review Signature: ________________________________ Date: __________________________________

6.5 Real-World Assault & Battery Claim Examples

A&B claims are expensive, difficult to defend, and frequently excluded from standard GL. These cases show why a standalone A&B policy and documented security protocols are non-negotiable.

Claim Scenario	Outcome / Settlement Range	Loss Control Lesson
Bouncer uses excessive force removing intoxicated guest — orbital fracture	**$375,000 — bar liable for bouncer's actions as employee**	*Written use-of-force policy + de-escalation training records + security contractor COI on file*

Claim Scenario	Outcome / Settlement Range	Loss Control Lesson
Bar fight between unknown patrons injures bystander at nearby table	**$210,000 — bar found negligent for inadequate security staffing levels**	*Document security staffing ratios per occupancy + incident response protocol in writing*
Parking lot assault after closing — victim sues bar for negligent security	**$155,000 — bar liable for known high-crime area with no outdoor security**	*Exterior lighting + CCTV in parking lot + documented post-close security sweep*
Employee physically ejects patron who hits head on curb — wrongful death suit	**$490,000 — A&B exclusion on GL left bar fully exposed**	*Verify A&B endorsement or standalone policy is in force; confirm sublimit is adequate*
Broken glass used as weapon during fight — patron sustains facial lacerations	**$285,000 — bar liable for failure to use plastic cups during high-risk late-night hours**	*Plastic cup policy after 10pm + documented late-night security escalation procedure*

Section 7: General Liability Risk Management

General Liability (GL) insurance protects your business against claims of bodily injury or property damage caused to third parties. For bars and restaurants, the primary GL exposures are on-premises injuries, product liability (food-related illness), completed operations, and advertising injury. The following loss control measures directly reduce GL claims and support favorable underwriting outcomes.

7.1 Guest Injury Response Protocol

WHAT YOU DO IN THE FIRST 15 MINUTES AFTER AN INCIDENT CAN MAKE OR BREAK A CLAIM

- Ensure the injured person is safe and call 911 / EMS if there is any question about their condition
- Assign one staff member to stay with the injured guest — do not leave them alone
- Gather names and contact information of all witnesses immediately
- Do NOT admit fault or make any statement about liability or payment
- Complete an incident report form within one hour of the incident
- Photograph the scene, the hazard, and any visible injury — with the guest's permission for injury photos
- Preserve evidence — do not clean the area or alter conditions until photos are taken
- Notify your insurance agent within 24 hours of any incident that may result in a claim
- Provide a copy of your incident report to your insurance agent

7.2 Property Inspection & Maintenance Log

Document all property maintenance and repairs. Carrier adjusters look for evidence that the business was aware of hazards and either corrected them or failed to do so. A maintenance log is your best defense.

Date	Item/Area Inspected	Condition (Good/Fair/Poor)	Action Required	Completed By/Date

7.3 Real-World General Liability Claim Examples

These scenarios represent actual claim types handled by hospitality carriers. Documented safety programs directly affect coverage availability and settlement outcomes.

Claim Scenario	Outcome / Settlement Range	Loss Control Lesson
Guest trips on uneven sidewalk at restaurant entrance — fractured wrist and shoulder surgery	**$185,000 settlement**	*Daily exterior inspection log + immediate repair protocol demonstrates reasonable care to carrier*
Child burns hand on unguarded table candle during dinner service	**$47,000 settlement — partial thickness burn, scar revision**	*Written candle policy + server checklist to guard table flames near children*

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Claim Scenario	Outcome / Settlement Range	Loss Control Lesson
Guest allergic reaction after server confirmed dish was nut-free	**$220,000 jury verdict — anaphylaxis requiring hospitalization**	*Written allergen disclosure policy + never guarantee allergen-free; train all kitchen staff*
Foodborne illness outbreak linked to improperly stored raw chicken — 11 claimants	**$310,000 + health department closure**	*HACCP plan + temperature logs + documented training = carrier defense support*
Patron falls in unlit parking lot after closing — broken hip	**$95,000 settlement**	*Lighting inspection log + photo documentation of conditions at time of incident*

Section 8: Property Insurance & Loss Control

8.1 Business Property Inventory

Maintain an up-to-date business property inventory for all equipment, furnishings, and improvements. In the event of a fire, theft, or covered loss, your inventory is the foundation of your claim. Store a copy off-site or in cloud storage.

Item Description	Serial Number	Purchase Date	Purchase Price	Replacement Value

8.2 Fire, Theft & Property Protection Measures

FIRE PROTECTION	THEFT & CRIME PREVENTION
Sprinkler system tested and tagged annually Smoke detectors tested monthly; batteries replaced annually Fire suppression system inspected semi-annually All fire extinguishers inspected and tagged annually Hood and duct system cleaned per schedule No storage within 18 inches of sprinkler heads Electrical panels accessible and unobstructed All extension cords eliminated — use permanent wiring No flammable materials stored near heat sources	Commercial-grade alarm system with central monitoring CCTV covering all cash handling areas Safe with daily reconciliation and drop log Two-person cash handling policy for all large counts Key control policy — log all key issuances Access codes changed when employees are terminated Liquor storage locked; inventory counted weekly Background checks for all employees handling cash POS system with individual login codes for all staff

8.3 Real-World Property Claim Examples

Property losses can close your doors for months. Business Income coverage and a current inventory are what separate a manageable loss from a catastrophic one.

Claim Scenario	Outcome / Settlement Range	Loss Control Lesson
Kitchen hood fire spreads to dining room — total loss of equipment and interior	**$680,000 property loss + $210,000 business income during 4-month closure**	*Hood cleaning logs + documented fire suppression inspections = carrier support and faster claim*
Burst pipe overnight floods entire restaurant — destroys flooring and all equipment	**$195,000 — under-insured because equipment was valued at original cost, not replacement**	*Annual property valuation review + replacement cost coverage (not actual cash value)*
Refrigeration failure over weekend destroys inventory — basic policy excluded spoilage	**$28,000 denied — most standard property policies exclude spoilage without endorsement**	*Add Spoilage / Food Contamination* ***endorsement*** *+ install temperature alarm system*
Theft of POS system and cash safe by terminated employee	**$42,000 — employee dishonesty exclusion on basic property policy; claim denied**	*Crime / Employee Dishonesty policy + access code change at termination = covered*
Hailstorm damages roof, HVAC, and outdoor patio — separate wind/hail deductible triggered	**$115,000 loss — $25,000 wind/hail deductible was a surprise to the owner**	*Review ALL deductibles at renewal — wind/hail deductibles are often separate and much higher*

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Section 9: Workers' Compensation Program

Workers' Compensation is required by law in Missouri and Kansas for businesses with employees. Your WC premium is driven by payroll, job classification codes, and — most importantly — your claims experience (Experience Modification Rate / EMR). A strong return-to-work and injury response program can dramatically reduce your costs.

9.1 Injury Response Protocol

EVERY WORK INJURY MUST BE DOCUMENTED AND REPORTED — EVEN MINOR INCIDENTS

- Provide first aid immediately. For serious injuries, call 911.
- Have the employee seen by your designated Workers' Comp medical provider — do NOT send them to a random ER if not an emergency
- Complete a First Report of Injury form within 24 hours of the incident
- Notify your insurance agent immediately — delayed reporting can jeopardize the claim
- Investigate the incident: interview the employee and witnesses, photograph the scene
- Identify and correct the root cause to prevent recurrence
- Begin return-to-work planning — light duty saves claims costs

9.2 Common Bar & Restaurant WC Claims & Prevention

Injury Type	Prevention Measure	Frequency
Cuts / Lacerations	Knife safety training; cut-resistant gloves; cut-safe mandoline covers	Most common
Burns / Scalds	Oven mitts policy; 'hot' verbal announcements; fryer protocols	Very common
Slips & Falls	Non-slip shoes; floor inspection; mat program	Very common
Lifting Injuries	Lift team policy for items over 50 lbs; proper technique training	Common
Repetitive Motion	Job rotation; ergonomic bar mat height; wrist support for dishwashers	Moderate
Struck By Object	Stacking protocols; storage limits; shelving capacity labels	Moderate
Violence	De-escalation training; security protocols; no-tolerance policy	Lower frequency, high cost

9.3 Return-to-Work Program

A formal return-to-work (RTW) program is one of the most powerful tools to reduce your WC costs. Carriers offer premium credits for documented RTW programs.

- Maintain a written list of modified duty / light duty positions available in your operation
- Contact the injured employee within 24 hours of any reported injury
- Coordinate with the treating physician to understand restrictions
- Offer modified duty as soon as medically cleared — even part-time
- Document all RTW activity in the employee's WC file
- Notify your carrier when the employee returns — even to light duty

9.4 Real-World Workers' Compensation Claim Examples

WC claims drive your Experience Modification Rate (EMR) for three years. Every prevented claim directly reduces your premium. These are the most common and costly claim types in your industry.

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Claim Scenario	Outcome / Settlement Range	Loss Control Lesson
Line cook reaches across hot range to retrieve pan — second-degree burn on forearm	**$34,000 — medical + 6 weeks modified duty + 3 years on EMR**	*Verbal hot announcement protocol + proper pan placement + burn station in kitchen*
Server slips on freshly mopped floor during lunch rush — knee surgery required	**$87,000 — torn ACL, surgery, 14 weeks out, PT, permanent partial disability rating**	*Wet floor cones + non-slip shoes strictly enforced + mop schedule away from service areas*
Dishwasher lifts full bus tub alone — herniated disc, back surgery	**$142,000 — two-man lift policy existed in writing but was never enforced**	*Enforce two-person lift for 50+* ***lbs*** *+ document training + post reminders at dish station*
Bartender develops carpal tunnel from repetitive shaking and pouring	**$28,000 — ergonomic claim; slow onset implicates multiple years of employment**	*Job rotation + ergonomic pour spouts + early reporting culture for discomfort*
Manager struck by delivery truck reversing into loading dock — skull fracture	**$195,000 + OSHA recordable + OSHA investigation**	*Spotter required for all delivery vehicles + painted pedestrian safety zones at dock*

Section 10: Employment Practices Liability (EPLI)

Employment Practices Liability Insurance (EPLI) protects your business against claims from employees for wrongful termination, discrimination, sexual harassment, wage and hour violations, and related claims. The restaurant industry has one of the highest rates of EPLI claims of any industry due to high turnover, close-quarter work environments, and tip credit wage complexities.

10.1 Anti-Harassment & Discrimination Policy

EVERY EMPLOYEE MUST SIGN AND RECEIVE A COPY OF THIS POLICY

This establishment is committed to providing a work environment free from all forms of unlawful harassment and discrimination. All employees, managers, contractors, and guests are expected to treat everyone with respect and professionalism.

10.1a Prohibited Conduct

- Sexual harassment: unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexual jokes, innuendo, or inappropriate touching
- Discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other protected characteristic
- Hostile work environment: conduct that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or abusive work atmosphere
- Retaliation against any employee for making a good-faith complaint or participating in an investigation

10.1b Reporting Procedure

- Any employee who experiences or witnesses harassment or discrimination should report it immediately
- Reports may be made to any manager, the owner, or directly to HR
- All complaints will be investigated promptly, thoroughly, and confidentially
- No employee will be retaliated against for making a good-faith report
- If the complaint involves the owner/top management, employees may contact the EEOC or state agency

10.2 Wage & Hour Compliance

Wage and hour violations are one of the fastest-growing sources of EPLI claims in the restaurant industry. The following practices are mandatory:

- Maintain accurate time records for all non-exempt employees — use a time clock, not manager estimates
- Pay overtime (1.5x) for all hours over 40 in a workweek for non-exempt employees — tip credits do not reduce overtime calculation base

- Understand your state's tip credit and tip pooling laws before implementing any tip sharing
- Never deduct from employee pay for walkouts, breakage, or uniform costs if it would take wages below minimum wage
- Provide all required meal and rest breaks per state law
- Never ask employees to work off the clock — even voluntarily
- Retain all time records and pay stubs for a minimum of three years

10.3 Termination Best Practices

- Always document performance issues with written warnings before termination (except for egregious misconduct)
- Use a progressive discipline policy and apply it consistently
- Conduct a termination meeting with at least two members of management present
- Never terminate an employee while they are on FMLA, workers' comp leave, or within 90 days of reporting harassment
- Prepare final paycheck per state law — Missouri requires payment by next scheduled payday; Kansas varies
- Collect all company property (keys, uniforms, access codes) at termination
- Change all access codes and revoke computer/POS access immediately upon termination
- Document everything — keep the termination file for a minimum of seven years

10.4 Real-World EPLI Claim Examples

The restaurant industry faces EPLI claims at a rate 30% above the national average. These are the most common claim types — and all are defensible with proper documentation.

Claim Scenario	Outcome / Settlement Range	Loss Control Lesson
Server alleges manager made repeated unwanted sexual comments — EEOC charge filed	**$95,000 settlement + $40,000 legal defense — employer had no prior harassment training**	*Annual harassment training + written complaint procedure + documented investigation protocol*
Cook terminated day after filing workers' comp claim — retaliation lawsuit	**$145,000 jury verdict — timing of termination created near-impossible defense**	*Never terminate within 90 days of a protected activity; document all performance issues first*
Tip pool policy change triggers collective wage and hour action by 18 servers	**$220,000 settlement — legal fees nearly matched settlement amount**	*Review tip pooling laws with a labor attorney before any policy change; document rollout*
Server alleges race discrimination after being passed over for promotion repeatedly	**$80,000 settlement — no documentation of promotion criteria or selection process existed**	*Written promotion criteria + document all selection decisions + apply standards consistently*
Former manager sues for wrongful termination — personnel file had only verbal warnings	**$110,000 settlement — nothing in writing; no signed acknowledgments**	*Progressive discipline in writing + signed acknowledgment for every warning issued*

Section 11: Commercial Auto Risk Management

Commercial Auto insurance covers vehicles used in your business operations — whether owned, hired, or non-owned. Common auto exposures for bars and restaurants include delivery vehicles, catering transport, shuttle or transport programs, and employees using personal vehicles for business errands.

11.1 Driver Qualification Standards

- All employees who drive on company business must be pre-approved — no exceptions
- Obtain and review an MVR (Motor Vehicle Report) before authorizing any driver
- Minimum driver standards: valid license, no more than two moving violations in three years, no DUI convictions in five years
- Conduct annual MVR reviews for all authorized drivers
- Document all approved drivers in a driver roster

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11.2 Vehicle Maintenance Log

Date	Vehicle (Year/Make/Model)	Mileage	Service Performed	Next Service Due

11.3 Hired & Non-Owned Auto (HNOA)

If employees ever use their personal vehicles for business errands — picking up supplies, making deposits, catering deliveries — your business has a Hired & Non-Owned Auto exposure. Their personal auto policy may not cover business use. Ensure your commercial auto policy includes HNOA coverage or add it by endorsement.

11.4 Commercial Auto Safety Rules

- No use of cell phones (including hands-free if it causes distraction) while operating any vehicle on company business
- Seat belts required at all times in any company or business-use vehicle
- No driving for company business while under the influence of alcohol or drugs — immediate termination offense
- All accidents involving company vehicles must be reported to management and the insurance agent within 24 hours
- Keep a copy of proof of insurance and vehicle registration in each company vehicle at all times

11.5 Real-World Commercial Auto Claim Examples

Auto claims are among the most expensive in commercial insurance. A single serious accident involving a company vehicle or employee-driver can exceed your primary auto limits and reach the umbrella.

Claim Scenario	Outcome / Settlement Range	Loss Control Lesson
Delivery driver rear-ends stopped vehicle — occupant requires neck surgery	**$185,000 — driver had two prior at-fault accidents; employer had never run an MVR**	*Annual MVR review for all drivers + written driver eligibility standards maintained on file*
Catering van runs stop sign, T-boned by SUV — both vehicles totaled, 3 injured	**$840,000 — exceeded primary auto limit; umbrella absorbed $340,000**	*Adequate auto limits + umbrella that follows form + documented driver safety training*
Employee runs supply errand in personal vehicle — causes accident; personal policy denies claim	**$95,000 — personal auto denied (business use exclusion); HNOA endorsement filled the gap**	*Add Hired and Non-Owned Auto coverage if any employee ever uses personal vehicle for business*
Manager drives company vehicle after post-shift drinks — DUI accident injures pedestrian	**$1.2 million — employer vicariously liable; no-alcohol vehicle policy was not enforced**	*Written no-alcohol vehicle policy + key control log + management accountability*
Delivery driver texting at speed strikes cyclist — cyclist paralyzed	**$3.5 million verdict — cell phone policy existed but was never documented as enforced**	*Written cell phone policy + telematics devices in vehicles + documented enforcement record*

Section 12: Commercial Umbrella — Protecting Your Biggest Assets

A Commercial Umbrella policy provides excess liability coverage above your primary General Liability, Liquor Liability, Commercial Auto, and Employers' Liability (WC) limits. In an era of increasing jury awards — particularly in hospitality and liquor liability cases — adequate umbrella limits are not optional for any bar or restaurant doing significant volume.

12.1 Why Umbrella Limits Matter

Scenario	Underlying Limit	Potential Verdict
DUI accident after leaving your bar	$1M Liquor Liability	$2–5M+ possible
Multi-party slip and fall	$1M GL	$500K–$3M

Scenario	Underlying Limit	Potential Verdict
Fight resulting in serious injury	$1M A&B	$500K–$2M+
Employee auto accident on delivery	$1M Commercial Auto	$1M–$5M+

12.2 Recommended Umbrella Limits by Operation Type

- Small bar/restaurant (under $500K revenue): $1–2M umbrella minimum
- Mid-size operation ($500K–$2M revenue): $2–5M umbrella recommended
- High-volume bar or late-night venue: $5–10M+ umbrella — discuss with your agent
- Catering operations or delivery: ensure commercial auto is included under umbrella

Talk to Jay Stoetzer to ensure your umbrella follows form on all underlying coverages and that there are no gaps between primary and excess layers.

12.3 Real-World Umbrella Claim Examples

These cases show how quickly a single incident can exhaust primary limits — and what the consequences are when umbrella coverage is inadequate or has gaps.

Claim Scenario	Outcome / Settlement Range	Loss Control Lesson
DUI patron kills family of four after leaving bar	**.8 million verdict — M liquor liability exhausted; M umbrella paid; owner personally exposed**	*High-volume bars need M+ umbrella; review limits annually as revenue and exposure grow*
Kitchen fire spreads to adjacent tenant and upper-floor apartments	**.3 million — GL and property exhausted; umbrella covered 00K; litigation ongoing**	*Umbrella must follow form on GL + confirm neighboring property exposures with your agent*
Multi-party slip and fall at large private event — 6 injured guests, 2 surgeries	**.65 million total — primary GL exhausted at M; umbrella absorbed 50,000**	*Notify agent before hosting large events; event-specific endorsements may be required*
Employee assault on guest — permanent disability; A&B excluded from umbrella	**.1 million — A&B policy exhausted; umbrella gap because A&B was not followed**	*Confirm umbrella follows form on A&B endorsement — this gap is extremely common*
Foodborne illness outbreak — 22 plaintiffs, class action filed	**.4 million — volume exceeded GL product liability sublimit**	*Verify product liability sublimit on GL; mass-casualty food events require umbrella*

Section 13: Annual Loss Control Calendar

The following calendar provides a structured, year-round schedule of risk management activities. Top hospitality insurance carriers — including those in the E&S market — look for documented evidence of ongoing loss control when renewing coverage or evaluating new accounts

Frequency	Task	Responsible Party
DAILY	Pre-opening slip/fall walkthrough; alcohol service monitoring; incident log review	*Opening Manager*
DAILY	Cash safe drops logged; POS reconciled; CCTV footage verified	*Manager on Duty*
WEEKLY	Hood filter inspection and cleaning (if high-volume)	*Kitchen Manager*
WEEKLY	Liquor inventory count and variance log	*Bar Manager*
WEEKLY	Refrigeration temperature log review; HACCP check	*Kitchen Manager*

Frequency	Task	Responsible Party
MONTHLY	Fire extinguisher visual inspection and log	*Designated Safety Officer*
MONTHLY	Smoke detector test; battery check	*Facilities / Manager*
MONTHLY	First aid kit restocking check	*Designated Safety Officer*
MONTHLY	Review of all incident reports from the prior month	*Owner / GM*
QUARTERLY	Full facility hazard assessment and slip/fall audit	*Owner / Safety Officer*
QUARTERLY	Kitchen equipment safety inspection	*Kitchen Manager / Owner*
QUARTERLY	Driver MVR review for all authorized drivers	*Owner / HR*
QUARTERLY	Review and update business property inventory	*Owner / Accountant*
ANNUALLY	Fire suppression system inspection by certified vendor	*Vendor / Owner*
ANNUALLY	Electrical system inspection	*Licensed Electrician*
ANNUALLY	Alcohol service training refresh for all applicable staff	*Management*
ANNUALLY	EPLI / harassment training for all staff	*Management / HR*
ANNUALLY	Review all insurance coverages with Jay Stoetzer	*Owner / Jay Stoetzer*
ANNUALLY	Update Certificate of Insurance files for all vendors / landlords	*Owner / Agent*
AT RENEWAL	Provide updated financials and payroll data to agent	*Owner*
AT RENEWAL	Review claims history and implement corrective actions	*Owner / Agent*

Section 14: Emergency Response Procedures

14.1 Emergency Contact List

Contact	Name / Number	Notes
Emergency / Fire / Police	911	Always first call
Poison Control	1-800-222-1222	Food or chemical poisoning
Owner / GM		Fill in
Insurance Agent — Jay Stoetzer	816-384-7738	jay@insure247.com
Workers' Comp Nurse Hotline		Obtain from your carrier
Designated Medical Clinic (WC)		Fill in with your carrier's preferred provider
Utility Company (Gas)		Fill in
Utility Company (Electric)		Fill in

Contact	Name / Number	Notes
Plumber (emergency)		Fill in
HVAC (emergency)		Fill in
Alarm Company		Fill in
Attorney		Fill in

14.2 Medical Emergency Protocol

- Call 911 immediately if the person is unconscious, not breathing, bleeding severely, or having a cardiac event
- Begin CPR if trained and person is unresponsive — AED is located: ________________________________
- Do not move an injured person unless they are in immediate danger
- Assign one employee to meet EMS at the entrance
- Clear bystanders from the area
- Notify the manager immediately
- Complete incident report within one hour
- Notify insurance agent within 24 hours

14.3 Fire Emergency Protocol

- Pull the nearest fire alarm
- Call 911
- Announce evacuation — calmly and clearly
- Evacuate all guests and employees through the nearest exit
- Do NOT use elevators
- Designate a manager to sweep restrooms and private areas before exiting
- Do NOT re-enter the building for any reason until cleared by fire department
- Meet at designated assembly point: _____________________________
- Account for all employees at the assembly point
- Notify insurance agent as soon as practical

Section 15: Insurance Coverage Review Checklist

Use this checklist annually — or any time your operations change significantly — to review your coverage with your insurance agent. Gaps in coverage are often discovered only after a claim has occurred.

✓	Coverage Item	In Force	Review Date
■	General Liability — $1M/$2M minimum; verify products and completed operations included	■ Yes ■ No	__________
■	Liquor Liability — separate policy or endorsement; confirm no exclusions for assault/battery	■ Yes ■ No	__________
■	Assault & Battery coverage — standalone or GL endorsement; confirm sublimit is adequate	■ Yes ■ No	__________
■	Business Property — replacement cost value; confirm equipment and improvements included	■ Yes ■ No	__________

✓	Coverage Item	In Force	Review Date
■	Business Income / Extra Expense — covers revenue loss during repair after covered loss	■ Yes ■ No	__________
■	Equipment Breakdown — covers mechanical and electrical breakdown of key equipment	■ Yes ■ No	__________
■	Commercial Auto — owned, hired, and non-owned auto; confirm delivery if applicable	■ Yes ■ No	__________
■	Workers' Compensation — statutory limits; confirm all employees are classified correctly	■ Yes ■ No	__________
■	Employers' Liability — $500K minimum; included on WC policy	■ Yes ■ No	__________
■	Employment Practices Liability (EPLI) — standalone policy; confirm defense coverage	■ Yes ■ No	__________
■	Commercial Umbrella — $2M+ recommended; confirm it follows form on all underlying	■ Yes ■ No	__________
■	Cyber Liability — data breach, POS hack, ransomware; increasingly important for restaurants	■ Yes ■ No	__________
■	Spoilage / Food Contamination — covers food loss from power outage or equipment failure	■ Yes ■ No	__________
■	Crime / Employee Dishonesty — covers theft by employees including cash skimming	■ Yes ■ No	__________
■	Certificates of Insurance — current COIs on file for all vendors, cleaning services, contractors	■ Yes ■ No	__________

Work With an Agent Who Specializes in Your Industry

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