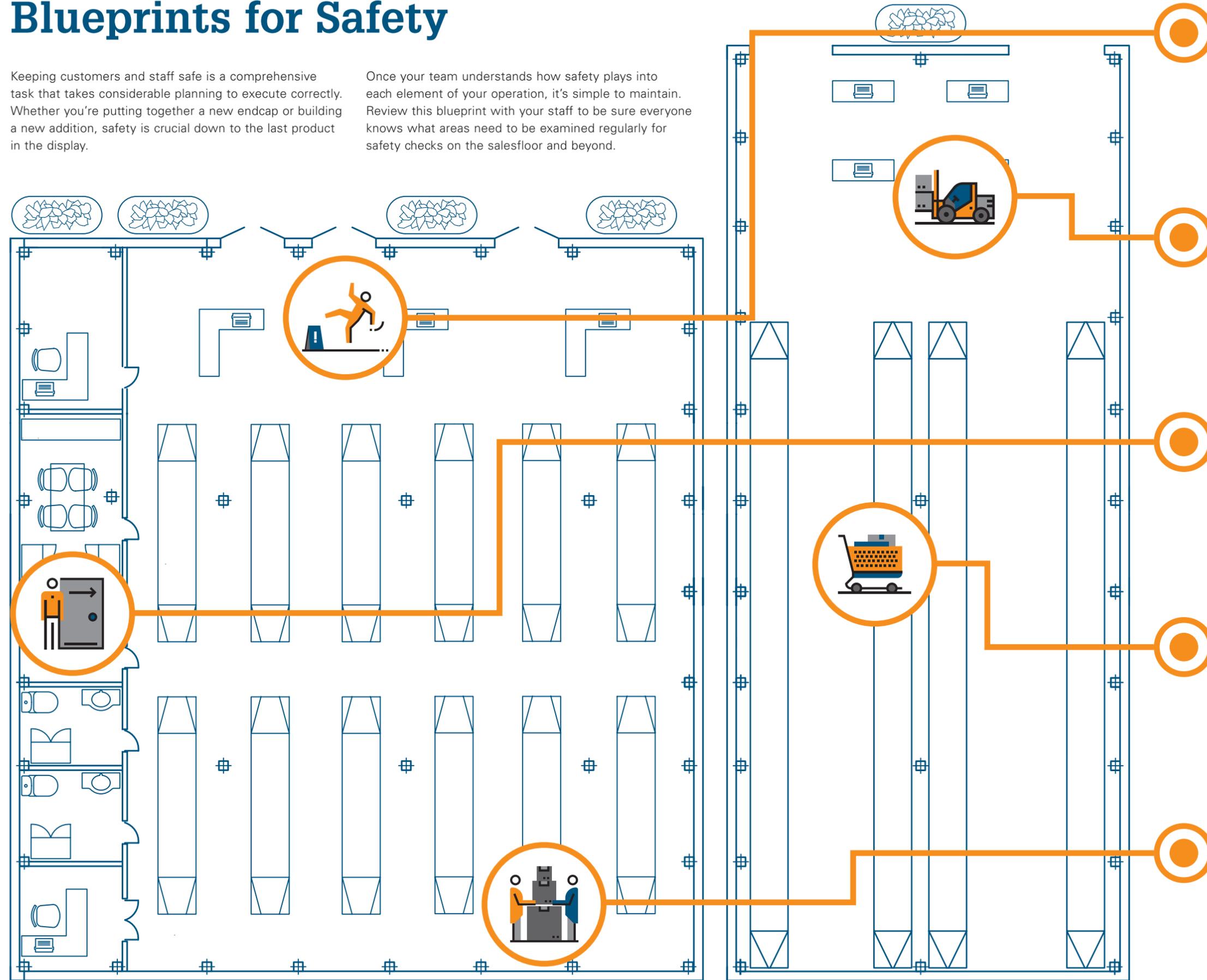


Blueprints for Safety

Keeping customers and staff safe is a comprehensive task that takes considerable planning to execute correctly. Whether you're putting together a new endcap or building a new addition, safety is crucial down to the last product in the display.

Once your team understands how safety plays into each element of your operation, it's simple to maintain. Review this blueprint with your staff to be sure everyone knows what areas need to be examined regularly for safety checks on the salesfloor and beyond.



Take an Entrance Exam

Evaluate your floors. Are they wet from customers tracking in rain or snow? Make sweeping and mopping a regular cleaning task throughout the day to prevent slips and falls. Be sure you have appropriate caution signage on display when employees are mopping or when there are slick spots. Another element of entrance safety is carpets or floor mats. Do you clean your entrance mats regularly? If they are getting worn and losing their effectiveness, it may be time to replace them.

Get an Outside Perspective

There are likely potential safety hazards outside the walls of your building. Train every employee to look for problem areas as they enter the store, such as merchandise blocking the walkway, burnt out lightbulbs or worn safety signage or paint. Post signage alerting customers to possible vehicle traffic. Be sure your staff always wears necessary personal protective equipment, from hard hats when handling building materials to garden gloves when handling rose bushes.

Practice Employee Safety

Don't forget about security and safety in employee-only areas. If your break room doubles as a storage area, use the same safety practices you use on the salesfloor. Don't stack items too high, and be sure there's enough space to safely move items. Make sure personal protective equipment is readily available for employee use. Include "employees only" signage on key cutters and pipe threading machines so customers don't attempt to use the equipment themselves.

Clear the Way

Have your staff make regular trips through the store to catch any misplaced items or merchandisers that have shifted into the walkway. Keeping wide, clear paths will keep your customers and staff safe, while also encouraging shoppers to keep browsing. When putting stock away, don't leave boxes in the aisles or box cutters unattended, and be sure ladders are clearly marked for employee use only. Train staff members to clean up spills of hazardous materials quickly and safely.

Don't Cut Corners

Follow the pyramid merchandising technique for displays: They should be largest on the bottom and narrow as they go up, with the heaviest items on the bottom and the lightest or smallest items on top. This strategy limits the possibility of customers or employees bumping into the display as they make their way through the store. Be sure to include signage on tall displays or heavy merchandise letting customers know to ask for assistance to get products down.