

Shopping Cart Retrieval Safety

Have you given any thought to safety while retrieving shopping carts from your parking lot? Have you trained courtesy clerks on shopping cart retrieval procedures? Are the employees who retrieve shopping carts physically conditioned to collect carts, especially during the summer months? Is the proper safety equipment used during cart retrieval?

While most grocery customers are considerate enough to place their empty shopping cart in the shopping cart corral after loading their groceries into their car, some simply leave the shopping carts wherever they choose. In either case, your courtesy clerks or other employees retrieve the shopping carts and return them to your store.

Below are some guidelines to help ensure customer and employee safety and prevent damage to your customers' cars:

Use of cart retrieval safety equipment

- Highly visible, fluorescent vests should be worn by employees when retrieving carts. You want your employees to be easily observed by people operating vehicles in the parking lot. This is particularly important when employees are retrieving carts during evening hours.
- Cart collection straps are an important tool in retrieving shopping carts. The strap will help the courtesy clerk in controlling the carts they are returning to the front of the store. Use of the strap is intended to prevent carts from getting away from the clerk and potentially damaging customer vehicles or injuring customers.

Cart retrieval training and procedures

- Instruct employees to collect no more than six carts at one time in order to avoid back strains. Where age or physical strength is a consideration, instruct employees to collect no more than four carts at one time.
- Train employees to report any damaged carts or those with poor wheel motion. Broken carts can create strains and injuries. Label those carts and remove them from use until they are repaired.
- Instruct employees to dress appropriately for the climate.
- During hot weather, make sure employees drink enough water to prevent dehydration.
- Train employees to:
 - Never assume a driver sees them or that a car will stop for them.
 - Make eye contact with drivers to ensure that they have been seen before they walk near or in the path of a moving or running vehicle.
 - Use their other senses (sound and smell) to identify vehicles that may be ready to move.
- Establish a program for ice and snow removal of sidewalks and parking lots. Hazards should be removed before employees are required to retrieve carts. Muscle strains or other injuries can be reduced if hazardous conditions are controlled or eliminated.

When you train employees to retrieve carts properly, you demonstrate that you value your employees' safety. The actions that you take will help prevent workplace accidents, keep your store running profitably, and help control or reduce your insurance costs.