A reasonable program is sensible and based on sound judgment. A prudent program exercises that sound judgment in practical matters, and consistent with the established principles and practices. This applies even if the facility has a limited budget for equipment, supplies, and personnel—if the program is conducted in the best possible manner with what is available—and the execution of the program is consistent with the established principles and practices.

Staff members must not only be able to observe overall field conditions, but also the multiple small details that are involved. These individuals must be equipped to handle the assigned maintenance and to recognize hazards and potential unsafe conditions. A daily field inspection form (Figure 1) helps guide personnel in completing maintenance tasks, serves as a reminder to conduct all safety inspections, and provides a record that both have been done.

Problems that can be easily rectified should be corrected immediately. If a problem can’t be fixed immediately by the crew, the crew leader should be instructed to note all the information on the form and report the problem to his or her supervisor. The supervisor would then be required to assign personnel to correct the situation and to document that the problem was rectified on a specific date and time, and by whom.

Checking it twice

Problems, and changes that may lead to problems, can be more difficult to recognize when personnel see the same facility on a daily or nearly daily basis. It’s important to augment crew members’ regular daily inspections with periodic inspections by a supervisor or non-staff safety auditor.

A checklist helps guide inspection and record that it has been conducted (Figure 2). The inspector would use the form to record both areas that meet facility standards and areas that don’t. Any problems noted on the form would be assigned for correction. Again, all details would be recorded, including the date and time the problem was rectified and by whom.

These procedures are important elements of a reasonable, prudent and consistent field maintenance and safety program. If necessary, the checklists provide documentation that will state the facility’s case during legal action.