

Slips, Trips & Falls

Slips, trips and falls are the largest cause of accidents in all sectors from heavy manufacturing to office work. But simple measures can be taken to reduce the risk of injury. Where possible, the aim should be to eliminate the risk at source; for example by leveling uneven floor surfaces. The next preferred option is substitution; for example, using an alternative method of floor cleaning, followed by separation (using barriers to keep workers away from wet floors). The final measure is protection; for example, wearing footwear with non-slip soles. Personal protective equipment should be used after all collective protective and technical measures have been exhausted.

Effective prevention

- **Good housekeeping** – keep the working environment clean and tidy, with floors and access routes kept clear of obstacles. Remove rubbish regularly so it does not build up.
- **Cleaning and maintenance** – rubbish should be removed regularly and work areas kept clear. Cleaning methods and equipment must be suitable for the surface being treated.
- **Lighting** – ensure good lighting levels, positioning lights to ensure all floor areas are evenly lit and all potential hazards, obstructions and spills can be clearly seen.
- **Floors** should be checked for damage regularly and maintenance carried out when necessary. Potential hazards include holes, cracks, and loose carpets and mats. Floor surfaces should be suitable for the work carried out; for example, it may need to be resistant to oil and chemicals used in production processes. Coating or chemically treating existing floors can improve their slip-resistant properties.
- **Stairways** – handrails, slip-resistant covers to steps, high visibility and non-slip marking of the front edges of steps and good lighting can all help to prevent slips and trips on stairs.

- **Spillages** – clean up spills immediately using an appropriate cleaning Method. Use warning signs where the floor is wet and arrange alternative routes.
- **Obstructions** – where possible, remove them. If this is not possible, then suitable barriers and warning notices should be used.
- **Trailing cables** – place equipment so cables do not cross pedestrian routes. Use cable covers to securely fix cables to surfaces.
- **Footwear** – workers need suitable footwear. Take account of the type of job, floor surface, typical floor conditions and the slip-resistant properties of the soles.



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