

Safety – Initiative

05 – Slips Trips and Falls

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1. Objective of the initiative

To ensure that personnel are aware of the dangers and are able to take the correct action to reduce the number of accidents caused through slips and trips.

2. Overview.

Slips and trips are the most common of workplace hazards and make up over a third of all major injuries. Over 10,000 workers suffered serious injury because of a slip or trip last year.

Slips and trips can happen almost anywhere. A large number of slips and trips result in broken bones and they can also be the initial cause for a range of other types of accident such as a fall from height.

Slips and trips are responsible for, on average:

- over a third of all reported major injuries
- 20% of over-3-day injuries to employees
- 2 fatalities per year

3. Implementation

All sites are to promote this initiative through a toolbox talk and display on the site health and safety notice board.

4. Planning and Supervision

Get conditions right from the start - will make dealing with slip and trip risks easier. Ensure lighting levels are sufficient, properly plan pedestrian and traffic routes and avoid overcrowding.

Site teams should work together to identify areas on site that they think are a slipping and tripping

risk (remember that there will be about 40 cases of a slip or stumble, resulting in no or minor injury for every major injury accident). Careful selection of materials, equipment and work practices can prevent or contain slip and trip hazards. For example use cordless tools to avoid trailing cables across working areas. This all helps to remove or minimise risks.

All site staff need to be involved and committed to reducing risks ensuring that areas of the workplace are kept safe, eg getting spillages and objects cleaned up quickly, keeping access routes clear and ensuring lighting is maintained. The use of the Safe Start cards on site should help hazard spotting and the reduction of risks.

Site staff should also be encouraged to be involved in reviewing existing control measures. They are often better placed to assess the effectiveness of the measures implemented to reduce the risks of slipping and tripping.

Check to ensure that working practices and processes are being carried out properly, eg smooth floors are not left wet, housekeeping is good, and any leaks from equipment repaired quickly. Keep a record of cleaning and maintenance work etc and encourage good health and safety.

The biggest barriers to putting the problems right include:

- People not taking the risks seriously.
- Little understanding of the causes of slipping.
- Thinking that slips and trips are inevitable.

Poor application of risk assessment and management controls

5. Improvement

Hazard	Suggested Action
Trailing cables	Position equipment to avoid cables crossing pedestrian routes, use cable covers to securely, fix to surfaces, restrict access to prevent contact. Consider use of cordless tools. Remember that contractors will also need to be managed.
Poor lighting	Improve lighting levels and placement of light fittings to ensure more even lighting of all floor areas
Miscellaneous rubbish, eg plastic bags	Keep areas clear, remove rubbish and do not allow it to build up.
Slippery surfaces	Assess the cause and treat accordingly, for example always keep them dry if wet causes the problem. In certain situations you may have to treat them chemically and use appropriate cleaning method etc. Change from wet to dry floor surface. Provide suitable footwear, warn of risks by using signs, and locate doormats where these changes are likely.
Spillage of wet and dry substances	Clean spills up immediately, if a liquid is greasy, make sure a suitable cleaning agent is used. After cleaning the floor can be wet for some time; dry it where possible. Use appropriate barriers to tell people the floor is still wet and arrange alternative bypass routes. If cleaning is done once a day, it may be possible to do it last thing at night, so it is dry for the start of the next shift
Rugs/mats	Ensure mats are securely fixed and do not have curling edges.

Changes of level	Try to avoid, if you can't, improve lighting, add high visible tread nosings (i.e. white/reflective edge to step). Slopes Improve visibility, provide hand rails, use floor markings.
Footwear	On site ensure all persons have the correct PPE (safety boots).

6. Dos and Don'ts

Do

- Try to eliminate hazards which could result in slips and trips
- Use better working practices e.g use of cordless tools and roll out walkways in difficult areas.
- Report all slip and trip hazards to management (near miss)
- Identify hazards in your work area prior to commencing work – use the Safe Start card.
- Eliminate identified hazards where possible, if not possible ensure others can be made aware of the hazard e.g signage
- Keep the site and you work area tidy
- Ensure you have suitable material to reduce the risk of slips and trips in outdoor working areas during times of snow and frost.
- See it, sort it, report it!

Don't

- Ignore hazards; they could result in unnecessary injury.
- Undermine the seriousness of slip and trip hazards
- Walk by

