

Safety & Wellbeing

Information Sheet – Slips and Trips



Over a third of all major injuries reported each year are caused as a result of a slip or trip (the single most common cause of injuries at work). These cost employers over £512 million a year in lost production and other costs. Slips and trips also account for over half of all reported injuries to members of the public.

Most slips occur in wet or contaminated conditions and most trips are due to poor housekeeping. The solutions are often simple and cost effective, a suitable assessment of the risks should identify the necessary controls and these should include (in no particular order):

- prevention of contamination
- management of spillages and cleaning regimes
- effective matting systems
- choice of suitable footwear
- design of workplace and work activities
- maintenance of plant and the work environment
- specification of appropriate flooring
- housekeeping
- effective training and supervision



Did you know?

Slips and trips are the most common cause of major injuries at work and can happen almost anywhere. 95% of major slips 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
- 50% of all reported accidents to members of the public that happen in workplaces
- cost to employers £512 million per year (lost production and other costs)
- cost to health service £133 million per year
- incalculable human cost
- more major injuries in manufacturing and in the service sectors than any other cause.

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.

But simple cost effective measures can reduce these accidents!

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How you can help prevent this type of incident.

1) Create Good Housekeeping Practices

Good housekeeping is critical. Safety and housekeeping go hand-in-hand. Play your part in keeping your work areas clean and tidy

2) Reduce Wet or Slippery Surfaces

Walking surfaces account for a significant number of incidents. These areas include:

- Car Parks;
- Walkways & Pavements;
- Food preparation areas;
- Showers/bathrooms;
- Floors in general.

Traction on outdoor surfaces can change considerably when weather conditions change. Those conditions can then affect indoor surfaces as moisture is tracked in by pedestrian traffic. When an area is wet take extra care, if you see a spillage report it. Never ignore it.



3) Avoid Creating Obstacles in Aisles and Walkways

Injuries can also result in from trips caused by obstacles, clutter, materials and equipment in aisles, corridors, entranceways and stairwells. Proper housekeeping in work and traffic areas is still the most effective control measure in avoiding the proliferation of these types of hazards. So keep all work areas, passageways, storerooms and service areas clean and orderly.

4) Create and Maintain Proper Lighting

Poor lighting in the workplace is associated with an increase in accidents. If you see a broken light report it. Use walkways that are adequately lit, avoid short cuts with only basic or no lighting.

5) Wear Proper Shoes

The shoes we wear can play a big part in preventing falls. The slickness of the soles and the type of heels you wear need to be considered. Shoelaces need to be tied correctly. You should always wear footwear appropriate for your work activities.

6) Control Individual Behaviour

We can all be easily distracted by random thoughts, people shouting our names (or at other people) or doing multiple activities. Being in a hurry will result in walking too fast or running which increases the chances of a slip, trip or fall. We all need to take care when at work and try and remain focussed on the activities we are doing. This will help prevent accidents and also improve the quality of our work.

Other Resources:

AS27 – Prevention of Slips Trips and Falls