



Safety & Wellbeing Policy Arrangement

Section 27 – Prevention of Slip, Trips and Falls

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Arrangement Section 27 - Management of Slips Trips and Falls

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Statement
3. The Causes of Workplace Slips, Trips and Falls
4. Risk Assessment
5. Good Housekeeping Practices
6. Reduce Wet or Slippery Surfaces
7. Avoid Creating Obstacles in Aisles and Walkways
8. Create and Maintain Proper Lighting
9. Appropriate Footwear
10. The Individual
11. Training Support

Appendix 1 – Employee Information Sheet

Schedule 1 – Impact Assessments

Further guidance on this matter can also be obtained from the Safety team at healthandsafety@northlan.gov.uk

Section 27 - Management of Slips Trips and Falls.

1. Introduction

Every year, nearly 11,000 people suffer injury as a result of a slip or trip at work. Across the UK, over the last ten years, the number of slip-related accidents has remained almost the same. This document should be used by Services and managers to put in place remove the hazards associated with slips, trips and falls on the same level.

2. Statement

North Lanarkshire Council aims to eliminate the risk of slipping, tripping or falling on the same level within and around the workplace. Assistant Chief Executives will be proactive in their efforts to put in place procedures and guidance aimed at reducing the risk of injury from a slip trip or fall.

The Council expects all employees to exercise due care and diligence when at work to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that their acts or omissions do not introduce hazards that might cause harm to others but rather their actions help to remove risk.

3. The Causes of Workplace Slips, Trips and Falls

There are many factors that can lead to people slipping, tripping or falling at work. They can often be categorised in the following manner:

- Footwear;
- Contamination and obstacles;
- Cleaning;
- People;
- Environment, to include flooring and the influence of weather etc.

This guidance will endeavour to provide guidance on these matters and provide support to the risk assessment process.

4. Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is the process that will facilitate a reduction in risk for people working in, or using Council workplaces and each of the above factors should be considered during that process. Heads of establishment, team managers and risk assessors need to ensure thought is give to these matters.

The risk assessment form (HSF4a or 4b) should be the basis of risk assessment activities and will prompt assessors to consider slips trips and falls within the assessment process.

Other specialist assessments may also seek consideration of slips, trips or falls on the same level where this is the case it is important that one of the assessments has recognised any risks and that this has resulted in the necessary controls being implemented. In other words the reason for assessment is not as important as the implementation of suitable and sufficient controls.

5. Good Housekeeping Practices

Good housekeeping is critical in minimising the risk of slipping, tripping or falling. Effective safety cannot exist without good housekeeping. If a workplace is noticeably clean, well organised and has exit routes clear of obstructions, it is a good indication that the head of establishment is managing health and safety well.

Effective housekeeping consists of 3 simple steps:

- **Plan ahead**– Think about the activities taking place in the areas, not just the day to day activities, and put in place mechanisms to ensure the workplace is going to be kept clean and clear of clutter/obstructions.

For example, if an office move/decant is being planned then have skips available in a safe location near the building for the waste materials. Waste cannot be stored in the corridors, it is normally combustible and will easily block the escape routes. Put the waste straight into the skips or other external receptacles.

- **Assign responsibilities**– Day to day cleaning of Council buildings will normally have been arranged with Facility Support Services. This will assign a specific person or group of people to keeping areas clean, although personal responsibility for cleaning up after himself/herself on an ongoing basis is always preferred.
- **Implement a program**– Establish housekeeping procedures as a part of the daily routine.

6. Reduce Wet or Slippery Surfaces

Walking surfaces account for a significant portion of injuries reported to the enforcing authorities. The most frequently reported types of surfaces where these injuries occur include

- Car parks;
- Pavement areas (or lack of);
- Food preparation areas;
- Shower rooms and bathrooms in residential facilities; and
- Floors in general.

Traction on outdoor surfaces can change considerably when weather conditions change. Those conditions can then affect indoor surfaces when moisture is brought in by the feet or the umbrellas of any pedestrian traffic. Local arrangements should be established to permit good traction to be maintained. These arrangements should be regularly reviewed to ensure their effectiveness is maintained or improved. Such arrangements may wish to include:

- Keeping car parks and pavements clean and in good repair condition;
- When snow and ice are present, remove or treat these elements. In some extreme cases, it may be necessary to suspend use of the area;

- The use of adhesive anti-slip materials or anti-skid paint can be a useful addition and should be used whenever the risk assessment process suggests that it may be of use.

Local arrangements may also need to reflect the need for some indoor control measures too. The following can help reduce the incidence of slips and falls:

- Use moisture-absorbent mats with bevelled edges in entrance areas. Make sure they have backing material that will not slide on the floor;
- Display “Wet Floor” signs as needed;
- Use anti-skid adhesive tape in troublesome areas;
- Clean up spills immediately. Create a procedure for taking the appropriate action when someone causes or comes across a food or drink spill;
- Use proper area rugs or mats for food preparation areas.

7. 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. This means having policies or procedures in place and allowing time for cleaning the area, especially where scrap material or waste is a by-product of the work operation. Consider the following:

- Keep all work areas, passageways, storerooms and service areas clean and orderly;
- Avoid stringing cords, cables or air hoses across hallways or in any designated aisle;
- In office areas, avoid leaving boxes, files or briefcases in the aisles;
- Encourage safe work practices such as closing file cabinet drawers after use and picking up loose items from the floor; and
- Conduct periodic inspections for slip and trip hazards.

8. Create and Maintain Proper Lighting

Poor lighting can also contribute to circumstances that make slips, trips and/or falls possible. The development of local procedures will need to consider the following:

- The use of proper illumination in walkways, staircases, ramps, hallways, basements, construction areas and dock areas;
- Mechanisms to keep work areas well lit and clean;
- The availability of light switches in order to ensure those entering a darkened room, are able to immediately access a light switch that is clear available;
- The need to keep walkways with lower lighting levels clear of clutter and obstructions;

- Repair fixtures, switches and cords immediately if they malfunction.

More information on appropriate lighting levels can be found in GD15 – Lighting Levels in the Workplace and GD 40 – Health and Safety in Winter Months.

9. Appropriate Footwear

Shoes can play a big part in preventing slips, trips and falls. The use of appropriate footwear would be considered part of the reasonable actions for employees to ensure their own safety at work.

The slickness of the soles and the type of heels worn need to be evaluated to avoid slips, trips and falls. Shoelaces need to be tied correctly. Whenever a fall-related injury is investigated, the footwear needs to be evaluated to see if it may have contributed to the incident. Employees are expected to wear footwear appropriate for their duties.

It would therefore be prudent for managers to incorporate a discussion about footwear into the induction discussions they have and tool box talks they use.

There may be occasions where footwear will be provided in response to specific risks. This provision may well fall within the terms of the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations (See AS18 – Personal Protective Equipment for more details).

10. The Individual

The inquisitive nature of people is such that distractions are difficult to eliminate. Instead there is a reliance on individuals to concentrate on the tasks at hand and not let their guard down. Distractions can lead to slips trips and/or falls. Being in a hurry will result in walking too fast or running which increases the chances of a slip, trip or fall. Taking shortcuts, not watching where one is going, using a mobile phone, carrying materials which obstructs the vision, wearing sunglasses in low-light areas, not using designated walkways and speed are common elements in many on-the-job injuries.

Managers should endeavour to structure/plan work activities in a manner that minimises the opportunities for distractions to negatively impact on their safety, health or wellbeing.

Whilst the Council has a responsibility to manage activities in the best way possible to minimise harm, the individual continues to have a duty to stay alert and pay attention to their surroundings.

11. Training Support

There is duty on the Council to provide suitable and sufficient information, instruction and training to employees. The nature and content of this training will be determined by the risk assessment process. Unless otherwise determined by that process, team members should receive information on reporting of hazards and the procedures to be adhered to when cleaning or dealing with spillages that could affect their safety or the safety of others.

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. Play your part!

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.

Impact Assessments

Document Title: Health and Safety Policy - Arrangement Section 27 – Prevention of Slips, Trips and Falls.

Environmental Impact Assessment: This document has been assessed for significant environmental impact; no detrimental impact has been identified

Equality Impact Assessment: This document has been assessed for significant equality implications; no significant issues have been identified.

General Comments: This document is the arrangement section relating the duty to undertake risk assessments associated with the prevention of slips, trips or falls. This action is required in compliance with the Council's health and safety policy and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The general aims of the council are to ensure a healthy and safe working environment for all persons working for or make use of Council Services. Nothing in the document serves to have a negative impact on either of the above topics. In general, this and associated documents will encourage positive consideration of relevant factors to ensure all members of the workforce and community are afforded access to the same safe and healthy workplace.