

Slips and Falls



FACT: Slips and falls account for 20,000 fatalities and 8 million hospital ER visits each year in North America.

Slips and falls continue to cause many accidents each year. Some of these incidents result in serious injuries or even death, and the cost of these losses is enormous.

No business or operation is free from the danger of slips and falls. The hazard exists everywhere. Parking lots, sidewalks, stairways, ramps, and even hallways are just a few.

By taking the time and effort, everyone can address these potential loss scenarios and make improvements or corrections to prevent losses from slip and fall exposures.

Ice or snow exposures:

- Prevent ice or snow from accumulating near heavy-traffic areas using canopies, eaves, or grilled flooring.
- Remove snow and ice by using melting compounds such as sodium chloride or salt. Both compounds are very effective, especially when combined with sand.
- If snow removal is contracted to an independent company, clearly establish removal and touch-up times based on shift starts, shift changes, and high-traffic times.
- Shoes or boots with excellent traction should be used for outdoor activities during winter months.
- Be cautious of areas that melt and then refreeze.
- When you use salt and sand, keep track of the dates, times, and locations with a salt log.

Wetness exposures:

- Downspouts and runoff water should be routed away from walking surfaces, especially near the entrance.
- Rubber-backed absorption mats and runners at entrances are helpful in improving traction at these critical areas.
- If water or snow is tracked into the building, the floor should be mopped frequently to remove excess water; signs should be posted to warn of potential slippery floor conditions.
- A good nonslip wax or abrasive coating may be an option in some situations.

Oil or grease exposures:

- Prevent oil and grease accumulations from getting on the floor surface.
- Wipe up and remove excess lubricant using nonflammable absorbents to clean up the residue and practice excellent housekeeping.
- Limit non-employee traffic in oil- and grease-saturated areas.
- Post appropriate signage to warn of potential hazards.

Lighting:

- Provide sufficient lighting in parking lots and buildings during business hours so everyone can see adequately.
- Test emergency lighting each month to ensure proper function during emergency situations.
- Stairwells, hallways, and remote traffic areas should be equipped with emergency lighting.

Office exposures:

- File drawers should be pushed in completely and all other tripping hazards should be removed.
- All maintenance should be done using proper tools and equipment such as ladders.
- Never use chairs or furniture to reach overhead objects.
- Keep all aisles, hallways, and traffic areas free from obstructions.
- All uneven walking surfaces or tripping hazards should be repaired immediately or clearly marked with caution signage.
- Stairwells should be constructed with consistent stair tread, rise and run, and be equipped with appropriate handrails and mid-rails.