

4 ways to prevent

slips, trips
and falls.



Slips, trips and falls are some of the most frequently reported workplace injuries, representing 25% of all claims filed each year.¹

A momentary lapse in concentration, a slight stumble or a careless step over a wet surface is all it takes before you or someone on your team is on the ground — or worse. Slips, trips and falls account for 15 percent of all general industry accidents, second only to those caused by motor vehicles, and they can happen anywhere at your worksite.² When they occur, they're capable of causing debilitating strains, serious disabilities and, in some cases, even death.

If you don't take the proper precautions to rid your worksite of the common hazards that cause these falls, you'll be more likely to see injuries among your team. That means decreased productivity, higher industrial insurance premiums and greater replacement training costs to you as an employer.

To help you prevent this, we've compiled four simple tips to reduce the likelihood of slips, trips and falls from occurring at your workplace. Follow these guidelines, and you'll be sure to have everyone up on their feet at all times.

change behavior

While there's no shortage of environmental hazards that can lead to catastrophic trip-ups, there are a variety of contributing human factors at play, as well. The good news is that remediating these risks is well within you and your team's control. All it takes is a little change of behavior.

Ask your staff to pay attention to their surroundings at all times. Staying alert can overcome any obstacle and can compensate for any compromised areas still lingering about your worksite. When walking, instruct your team to take it slow, and avoid rushing at all costs. Prohibit the use of shortcuts that may lead employees down paths with many obstacles — and rope them off, if necessary. Make sure the production schedules you set are realistic to ensure a steady stream of work without the need for rushing.

Overburdened staff members are also more susceptible to trip-ups when they can't properly control what they carry. To remedy this, install controls that limit the amount of objects workers can transport in a single trip.

promote good housekeeping

Workplace clutter, unwound hoses and loose extension cords are all common causes of trips that can easily be avoided with a little housekeeping. While you're busy taking measures to address the overall safety of your operations, instruct your team members to do their part by taking care of their own personal workstations.

To guarantee cleaning gets done, develop a chore schedule or cleaning program, and assign specific staff members to individual tasks. Identify the major hazard areas across all your work zones and create steps to eliminate them at the end of each workday. Once workers clearly understand what needs to get done (and by whom), it will eliminate any confusion and reduce the risk of skipping any critical steps when cleaning.

¹ OSHA. "Slips, Trips and Falls." OSHA.gov. https://www.osha.gov/dte/grant_materials/fy07/sh-16625-07/slipstripsfalls.ppt

² Copeland, Julie. "Painful Statistics of Slips, Trips and Falls." Arbill.com. <https://www.arbill.com/arbill-safety-blog/bid/203028/Painful-Statistics-on-Slips-Trips-and-Falls>

According to OSHA, more than 17% of all disabling workplace injuries occur as a result of falls.³

maintain proper lighting

Obscured vision is one of the leading cause of slips, trips and falls. Poorly lit areas reduce the visibility of hazards like poor floor conditions, out-of-place equipment and loose cables, so make sure all areas of operation are lit adequately. Install proper lighting in high-traffic areas and throughout all employee workstations. For stairs and other areas with high potential drops, highlight step edges and elevator entryways with bright coloring to maintain visibility, even in situations where lighting might be less than optimal.

Instruct employees to always turn on lights before entering a room, even if they're only dropping something off quickly. Keep wall areas around light switches free and clear of obstacles, and remove objects that may be blocking them from the front. When lights go out, replace bulbs quickly to prevent accidents in the time between repairs.

³ *ibid.*

monitor floor conditions — inside and out

Slips, trips and falls both start and end on the floor, so monitoring the state of the floor conditions throughout your workplace is paramount to improving the safety of your operations. Dry conditions, like dust and powder, can make walking surfaces just as slippery as water, mud or grease. Clean floor surfaces regularly to eliminate hazards, but don't go overboard — over-polished surfaces can become slick and dangerous to walk on. For particularly problematic areas, installing slip-resistant coverings can provide better traction and reduce the need to clean as frequently.

Proper floor upkeep extends beyond just keeping surfaces free from spills and other debris, however. Monitor the ground for crumbling, uneven or missing floor tiles. Outside, clear all entryways, sidewalks and parking lots of ice, snow and plant debris to prevent slips on the way in. The outside of your building requires just as much attention as the inside.

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stay-safe cheat sheet

change behavior

- Instruct staff to stay alert and pay attention to their surroundings at all times.
- Prohibit the use of shortcuts, and rope off areas with excess obstacles.
- Set limits on how much employees can carry in one trip.

promote good housekeeping

- Many incidents of slips, trips and falls could have been avoided if workplace materials were put away properly.
- Require all members of your team to clean and care for their own workstations.
- Develop a schedule that defines cleaning responsibilities for all staff members to ensure hazards get removed.

maintain proper lighting

- Install proper lighting in high-traffic areas and throughout all employee workstations.
- Highlight stair edges and elevator entryways with bright coloring to increase visibility.
- Keep wall areas around light switches free of obstacles, and replace burned-out bulbs quickly.

monitor floor conditions

- Sweep away dry conditions like dust and powder. Mop up wet conditions like water, mud and grease.
- Avoid over-polishing surfaces as they can become slippery.
- Outside, clear away debris, like leaves and pine needles. Shovel snow and put salt on ice.