



SLIP, TRIP AND FALL PREVENTION

Over 200,000 annual work-related injuries occur nationwide due to employee slips, trips and falls. Historically, they have been a leader in the frequency (total number of incidents) and severity (total costs) of workers' compensation claims.

Although not inclusive, many of the slip, trip, fall incidents occurring in public schools are due to the following: wet walking surfaces due to water, food, or foreign substance; using a chair or table to reach overhead objects; electrical cords/hoses located across walkways; stripping/finishing floors without proper footwear; material and/or debris located on walking surfaces; broken or missing stair tread; defective sidewalks; parking lot pot holes; taking short cuts between the parking lot and the building instead of using the provided sidewalk; ice/snow covered sidewalks and parking lots; inadequate illumination.

The costs associated with slip, trip, and falls are calculated into your experience modification factor, which can cause an increase in your workers' compensation premium. Therefore, it is important to control the frequency and severity of slip, trip, fall incidents. The average cost per claim for some of these slip, trip, and falls are: slip/fall on ice/snow, \$2,749.00; slip/fall on liquid, \$2,127.00; slip/fall from chair/table/desk, \$1,910.00; slip/fall on stairs, \$2,720.00; fall from a ladder, \$6,339.00; and slip/fall while stripping/waxing/buffing floor, \$4,389.00.

To help reduce slip, trip and fall injuries, safety committees should discuss the following tips, and implement the most efficient means for communicating them to staff.

Rules

The subject of this month's newsletter is "Slip, Trip, and Fall Prevention." Please forward this to all appropriate staff. Should you have a safety topic that you would like to have covered in a future safety newsletter, please let me know.

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Rules

- Slippery conditions should be reported to the Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds as soon as possible so they can be resolved.
- Do not use a chair or table to reach overhead objects, to hang posters on a bulletin board, change a light bulb, etc. Employees should use a sturdy stepladder or step stool.
- "Wet floor" signs should be used when a floor surface is wet to warn other individuals of the hazardous condition that exists.
- Spilled food, liquids or other substances should be cleaned up as soon as possible. A system should be developed for personnel to promptly report these conditions.
- Employees should be reminded to use proper footwear at all times. Wearing shoes with worn soles or high heels can cause slip, trip, fall incidents.
- Do not take shortcuts between the parking lot and building – use sidewalks provided.

Inspection & Maintenance

- Doormats should be provided inside all exterior doorways so people can wipe off their shoes and keep them fairly dry. This practice will also help keep your building's floors safe and dry.
- Ensure that there is proper drainage outside doors so that water and/or ice does not accumulate.
- Ensure that sidewalks provide smooth, even walking surfaces. Uneven walking surfaces, cracked/damaged concrete, and joint elevations should be repaired as soon as possible.
- Ensure that parking lots are free of potholes. If "speed bumps" are provided, they should be highlighted with yellow paint.
- Highlight the edges of steps, curbs, platforms & loading docks with yellow paint/safety tape (of a contrasting color) to help prevent falls.
- All steps should be provided with uniform stair treads in good condition.
- Handrails should be provided where needed. Missing or loose handrails should be replaced and secure.
- Ensure that ladders/stepladders are provided where needed, and that they are in good condition.
- Floor surfaces and walking surfaces should be free of tripping objects and clutter.
- Nonslip floor finish, meeting the ASTM Standard of .50 or greater static coefficient of friction, should be used on floor surfaces.
- Ensure that carpeting is secure and does not present a trip hazard.
- Snow removal and ice control procedures should have parking lots and sidewalks cleared before the start of the school day.
- Nonskid floor strips/mats having the proper degree of slip resistance should be used in front of kitchen sinks and in dish washing areas.

Education and Awareness

- Remind employees of all slip, trip, and fall prevention rules.
- Remind employees to report all slip, trip, fall hazards to their immediate supervisor.
- Remind employees to use common sense if they can't avoid walking on snow/ice covered sidewalks or parking lots. They should decrease their momentum by taking short steps and walking slowly.
- Remind employees that when carrying material, the load should not obstruct their vision.