



# **SME Risk Management Guide**

## **Slips and trips**





# Why is this important?

Slips and trips are the most common cause of injury at work. On average, they cause 40% of all reported major injuries and can also lead to other types of serious accidents, for example falls from height. Slips and trips are also the most reported injury to members of the public and it's estimated that slips and trips alone cost society over £800m per year. \*

## What do I need to think about?

- People rarely slip on clean, well maintained and dry floor surfaces.
- Slips are most often caused by liquids or other items not being cleaned off floors with trips most often caused by poor maintenance of floors or pathways
  - check you're managing these risks correctly.
- Are floor surfaces appropriate for the environment?
- Are spillages or contamination likely to be present?
- Are there high levels of maintenance in place?
- Are there any high-risk areas, such as busy places or areas where spillages or contamination are more likely, such as toilet areas, which need extra care?
- How are spillages or contamination cleaned up to prevent accidents?
- How is electrical equipment such as vacuum cleaners and floor buffers used to prevent anyone tripping on the cables?
- Are correct cleaning chemicals and cleaning procedures in use?
- Is cleaning managed to take place at quiet times or when areas are closed?
- Are 'Wet Floor' signs used correctly and not left out all the time?
- Have suitable handrails been provided on staircases and steps which have 3 steps or more?
- Are the edges of steps non-slip and easy to see, and ideally fitted with contrasting edges?
- Is matting provided at all external doorways, is this adequate to cope with wet and snowy weather, and ideally 2 metres long?
- Is footwear worn by your team suitable for their job role and working environment (this doesn't need to be safety shoes depending on these factors)?
- Are there good lighting levels to inside and outside walkways and yard areas?
- What procedures are in place to help keep main entrance and pathway areas of external areas, including yards areas, free from ice and snow when people may be using them?





# What do I need to put into place?

- Undertake risk assessments for all areas covering risks associated with slips, trips and falls making sure they're tailored to the environment and any spillages or contamination that may occur.
- Put into place all the controls that you've identified as being required to reduce the risk in your risk assessments. This could include:
  - » Correct use of cleaning chemicals.
  - » Timing of routine cleaning and procedure to follow.
  - » Process for safely managing spot or spillage cleaning.
  - » Details of how to safely use electrical equipment such as vacuum cleaners and floor buffers.
  - » Special requirements for high-risk areas and external areas, including yard areas.
  - » Requirements for footwear.
  - » Maintenance details for all floor and stair surfaces areas and lighting levels, for both inside and outside areas.
- » The process for reporting defects and other issues and how these should be managed until the defects or issues have been repaired or rectified.
- » Reviewing accidents and incidents to help identify where further improvements can be made.
- » Making sure that all risk assessments are reviewed regularly (annually or when there are major changes to the business).
- Make sure that all employees are trained on the controls that are in place. This needs to include:
  - » New employees before they start work.
  - » Existing employees when new processes and controls are introduced.
  - » Regular refresher training for all.
  - » Make sure appropriate training is put in place for agency or temporary employees.
  - » Remember to keep records of all training.



# Common mistakes to try to avoid

- Not cleaning up any spillages or contamination from the floor in a timely and safe way.
- Not organising cleaning to prevent people walking on wet floors or tripping over cables.
- Leaving 'Wet Floor' signs out all the time even when not required.
- Using chemicals incorrectly which can lead to slippery floor surfaces and issues such as a build-up of grease and chemical residue on the floor.
- Reporting defects but not taking action to prevent accidents and incidents happening until the defects are repaired.
- Having inadequate matting at external entrances leading to floors becoming wet and slippery in wet and snowy weather.
- Not completing or properly recording routine checks on identified key high-risk areas such as toilet areas.
- Having inadequate lighting for outside areas such as paths and car parks and yard areas when these areas will be used whilst it's dark.
- Not putting in place measures for external and yard areas, including how to deal with snow and ice in the winter.

## Where can I find more information?

- General information can be found at [Slips and trips - HSE - Slips and trips : HSE](#)
- Help in choosing the right safety footwear can be found at: [Choosing slip-resistant footwear](#)

## References: Slips and trips:

[Workplace costs of slips and trips - Slips and trips – HSE](#)

\* Hospital Episode Statistics - England: financial year 2002-03

[Statistics - Slips and trips - HSE](#)



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