



How to avoid workplace slips, trips and falls

Inspiring learning for all

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Slips, trips and falls are the leading cause of major injury in the workplace. They don't just harm employees; they're bad for your business too. If someone is injured by a slip, trip or fall they will spend, on average, eight days away from work.*

Businesses can avoid the human, financial and productivity costs that arise from accidents by assessing potential causes of slips and trips in the work environment and taking action to address them.

In this guide, HSE's Falls Prevention expert, Mark Liddle, highlights twelve common workplace hazards and suggests how they can be addressed to help prevent unnecessary workplace slips, trips and falls.

*www.hse.gov.uk/statistics

CAUTION



WET FLOOR

Drives, pathways and other areas used by pedestrians can become slippery due to the accumulation of mud, grass, wet leaves, moss or ice.

SOLUTION

Ensure that hazardous areas are cleared on a regular basis, prioritising routes that receive the greatest footfall.



Uneven paving or potholes on or around paths.

SOLUTION

Clearly barrier off the area whilst necessary repair work is undertaken.

Pathway levels change subtly because of, for example, gentle slopes or small steps.

SOLUTION

Make changes in level more obvious by using appropriate lighting, reflective markers or high visibility paint.





Fire escapes and building entrances are slippery as a result of rain.

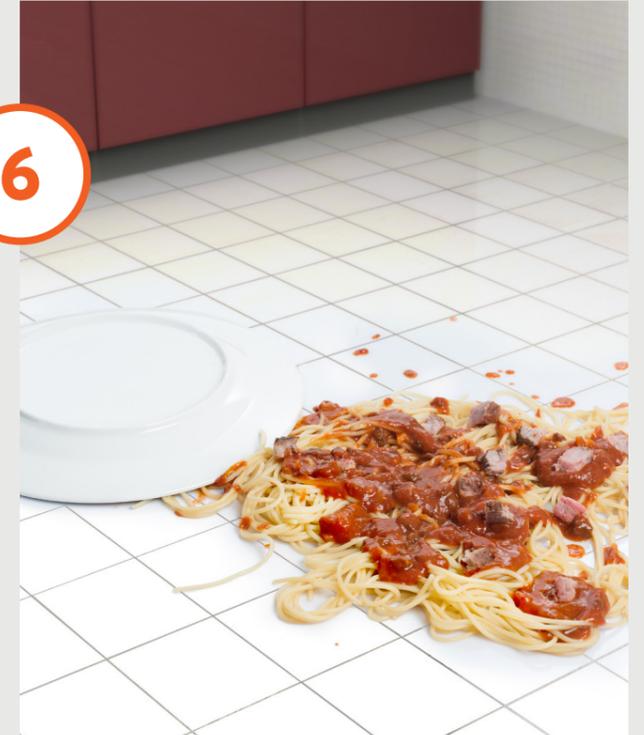
SOLUTION

- Apply slip resistant material to fire escapes.
- Shield entrances with rain canopies.
- Ensure drainage is adequate.
- Fit large and absorbent entrance mats.
- Introduce 'dry mopping' to cleaning regime.

Flooring is subject to liquid spills, dust, dropped food, litter or other contamination.

SOLUTION

- Ensure any contamination is cleaned up quickly.
- Fix leaks, provide adequate waste bins, place mats or drip trays beneath plants or water dispensers.
- Close doors between areas where floor contamination is likely to spread.

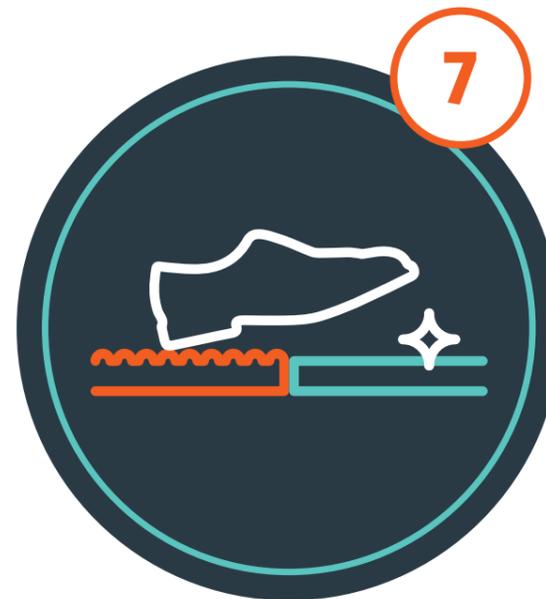


Trip hazards such as delivery items, boxes, trailing cables, mats with curled edges etc. are present in entrance or work areas.

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SOLUTION

- Provide safe storage for deliveries and other items.
- Re-route cables away from areas of footfall.
- Secure the edges of mats, carpets or tiles, replacing where necessary.
- Ensure walkways are unobstructed.



Floor surfaces change abruptly e.g. smooth wood flooring adjoins a carpeted area.

SOLUTION

- Consider the risk that the change in flooring characteristics may present.
- Recognise that smooth surfaces are likely to present a slip risk if they become contaminated.
- If there is a slight change in level it may be appropriate to clearly highlight the change from one floor surface to another using appropriate lighting and coloured non-slip tape or paint to provide good visual contrast.



Floor surfaces cannot be seen clearly due to insufficient lighting or excessive reflections/glare.

SOLUTION

- Install brighter lamps or additional lighting where needed.
- Angle lighting and/or install window blinds or anti-glare film to reduce reflections.
- Consider changing highly reflective floor surfaces.

The nosings (edges) of steps or stairs are difficult to see, worn/rounded, damaged or slippery.



SOLUTION

- Ensure that steps are adequately lit.
- Highlight the very edge of each step or stair with a high-visibility edging strip that contrasts visually with adjacent surfaces.



Stair treads are slippery.

SOLUTION

Try to stop contamination getting onto the surface. Where this is not reasonably practicable, apply slip resistant coverings and/or implement well managed and effective cleaning regimes.



Wet floors are accessible during, or immediately after, cleaning.

SOLUTION

- Where possible, use barriers to keep people away from wet floors or arrange for cleaning to take place out-of-hours.
- Specify footwear with an appropriate GRIP rating for workers who need to walk on wet, slippery floors to help manage the risk.

Cleaning items, rubbish sacks, cleaning equipment cables and associated items create potential trip hazards.

SOLUTION

- Consider use of cable-free rechargeable cleaning equipment.
- Provide training on trip hazard awareness and monitor effectiveness.
- Arrange for cleaning to take place out-of hours.



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