






Slips, Trips and Falls Guidance

Version control

The version history must reflect the current status of a document, i.e., whether it is in its draft or approval status. The table shall reflect the date issued / approved, who by, the current version, and a brief statement outlining the amendments made.

Rev:	Status / amendments	By	Date
1_01	Draft created	C. Warden	09.11.2022
1_02	Final draft issued to sportscotland	A. MacDonald	01.09.2023
1_03	Comments received from Health and Safety Operational Group Document amended	M. Fraser	18.10.2023

Document creation / approval

	Signature	Title	Date
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Approved By: Jo Dixon on behalf of the H&S Committee	DocuSigned by:  889E63E8056342B...	Head of Human Resources	04-Nov-23 10:49:42 GMT
Approved By: Scott Baxter on behalf of PCS Union	DocuSigned by:  1455ED4FC7E1447...	Trade Union Representative	07-Nov-23 09:17:48 GMT

'Slip, trip or fall' is the collective term for a process, which has slipping and tripping being the near miss stage of a fall. The outcome of the event may result in harm or no harm.

We have assessed the risks for slips, trips and falls. To prevent the occurrence of slips, trips and falls all employees have a responsibility to maintain a safe working environment.

To fulfil our duties, we will:

- Complete appropriate risk assessments, and implement adequate control measures;
- Carry out proactive checks around the premises;
- Instruct all employees to maintain good housekeeping standards, keeping walkways free from obstructions and trailing cables;
- Instruct all employees to report any hazards that would result in a slip, trip or fall;
- Instruct cleaning employees to remove any waste daily to prevent the accumulation of waste;
- Carry out daily checks to ensure that the flooring is in good condition and free from any trip hazards;
- Instruct all employees that when spillages occur employees are to clean up promptly and any wet floors, floor signage is to be displayed clearly, however, where floors which people are required to use are to be dried so far as is reasonable;
- Encourage employees to wear appropriate footwear;
- Carry out reactive checks including the reviewal of accidents or incidents that have been caused by a slip or trip;
- Provide sufficient lighting to allow employees and others to move around our premises safely;
- Fix leaks promptly that are causing floors to become wet; and
- Provide signage or other identifying means, to highlight a slip and trip hazard.

Falls are often discussed along with slips and trips, but they are very often much more serious and potentially fatal. Falling from height is a common workplace accident that can all be avoided by proper planning, assessments, training and supervision. Employees are to remember that what they might fall onto is also an important consideration when considering the potential risk of completing a task at height.

Before any work at height is undertaken it will be suitably assessed to either avoid doing it at all or to work out the best and safest way to complete it. This includes the use of ladders and stepladders. Employees are encouraged to refer to the Ladders and Stepladders Guidance, in addition to speaking with the Health and Safety Officer when planning any at height work or before engaging contractors to complete this work for us.

Common causes of slips, trips and falls

Slips and trips likely causes – slip and trip accidents may have different causes, but often have the same result. By looking at the contributing factors separately, it is possible to work out more accurately the cause of a slip or trip accident.

Slip hazards:

- Spills and splashes of liquids and solids;
- Wet floors (following cleaning);
- Unsuitable footwear;
- Rain, sleet and snow, ice;
- Change from a wet to a dry surface (footwear still wet);
- Unsuitable floor surface/covering;
- Dusty floors;
- Sloping surfaces.

Trip hazards:

- Loose floorboards/tiles;
- Uneven outdoor surfaces;
- Holes/cracks;
- Changes in surface level – ramps, steps and stairs;
- Cables across walking areas;
- Obstructions;
- Bumps, ridges and protruding nails, etc;
- Low wall and floor fixtures – door catches, door stops;
- Electrical and telephone socket outlets.

Fall hazards:

- Overreaching;
- Climbing on furniture;
- Rushing down steps/stairs, ladders and faulty equipment;
- Not using handrails when using stairs.

Factors which increase risk:

- Untrained employees;
- Risk assessments not carried out regularly;
- Poor or unsuitable lighting;

- Wrong cleaning regime/materials;
- Moving goods/carrying/pushing or pulling a load;
- Rushing around;
- Distractions/fatigue;
- Effects of alcohol;
- Drugs and medications.

Good management of slip, trip and fall hazards

Workplace conditions

Get conditions right in the first place. It will make tackling slip and trip risks easier. Choose the right floor surfaces and suitable lighting, properly plan pedestrian and traffic routes and avoid overcrowding. All these are important.

Good housekeeping

Good housekeeping is important in preventing hazards and applies as much to wards, offices and other premises/facilities provided by **sportscotland**:

- Keep work areas tidy – it will create a better working environment and mean fewer accidents;
- Do not store items in stairwells or restrict access routes to less than one meter;
- Do not store items above six foot in height;
- Do not use ladders under any circumstances.

Training

Properly train workers, particularly in the correct use of any safety and cleaning equipment provided, and clearly state who is responsible for what; this will help to minimise risks. Include slips trips and falls in the induction process.

Cleaning equipment, materials and methods

Ensure that cleaning methods and equipment are suitable for the type of surface being treated. These depend on several factors, such as the type of use and location and will have been identified in the risk assessment. Take care not to create additional slip and trip risks, for example from residues not properly removed from a surface. Encourage the use of scrubber dryers. Always warn others in the immediate vicinity that floor cleaning is in progress and display floor cleaning warning notices.

Maintenance programmes

A proper programme of maintenance will ensure that the steps you have taken remain effective. Always check floors and floor coverings regularly, report damage immediately and section off damaged floor areas where possible.

A good system of maintenance ensures that:

- a. maintenance (including inspection, testing, adjustment and cleaning) is carried out at suitable intervals;
- b. dangerous defects are corrected and access to faulty equipment or hazardous areas is prevented in the meantime;
- c. suitable records are kept so that the system can be monitored.

Repairs

Necessary maintenance and repairs must be carried out. Monitor repairs and inform the maintenance department if repairs are not carried out swiftly.

Cleaning activities

While cleaning and maintenance work is being carried out, take care to avoid creating hazards. Fence off wet surfaces until dry, take care with trailing leads from cleaning equipment, and if possible carry out cleaning and maintenance during quieter hours.

Suitable lighting

Lighting should enable people to see obstructions on floor, potentially slippery areas etc. so they can work safely. Replace, repair or clean lights before lighting levels become insufficient for safe working.

Arrange lighting and light fittings so they do not create dazzling light or glare that can make it difficult to see. Ensure light levels are not reduced, for example by goods stacked in such a way as to block light or cast shadows.

Local lighting should always be provided at staircases and changes of level; it is usually also needed at ramps where there is no change in colour, texture or flooring material from level walkway to ramp.

Flooring

Poor floor conditions are a major cause of slips and trips. Regular checks should be made for loose floor finishes, holes and cracks in surfaces, loose and worn out rugs and mats, etc.

Even a good surface will become dangerous in certain conditions, for example if liquids are spilt onto it. However, where they do occur, they should be cleaned up immediately or the area fenced off to make people aware until they can be cleaned up. Where floors are unavoidably wet or dusty through work activity, take special care in the choice of floor coverings or floor surface.

Obstructions

Failure to tidy up properly and objects left on walkways can easily go unnoticed and cause a fall. Where it is not possible to remove obstacles, take precautions to reduce the risk of accident by preventing access. Alternatively, warning people of the dangers, for example by using warning signs or hazard cones.

Footwear

While much can be done to reduce hazards, there will often be some remaining risk. An important second line of defence will be to ensure people have the right footwear.

Slip, trip and fall hazards guidance

Hazard	Suggested action
Spillage of wet and dry substances Bodily fluids	Clean spills up immediately. If a liquid is greasy, ensure a suitable cleaning agent is used. Use spill kits, especially to contain larger spillages. After cleaning, the floor may be wet for some time. Use appropriate signs to tell people the floor is still wet and arrange alternative bypass routes.
Untrained employees or lack of continuous training of employees	Trained employees must be used to carry out the required duty, i.e., moving and handling, in-service training should be made available to employees.
No risk assessments	Risk assessments should be done at regular intervals, also incidents must be reported and control measures put in place.
Miscellaneous rubbish, for example plastic bags	Keep areas clear, remove rubbish and do not allow to build up.

Slippery surfaces	Assess the cause and treat accordingly, with appropriate cleaning method, regime/material.
Poor lighting	Improve lighting levels and placement of light fittings to ensure more even lighting of all floor areas.
Changes of level	Improve lighting, add high visibility tread nosing's.
Slopes	Improve visibility, provide handrails, and use floor markings. Install nonslip coating or strips.
Unsuitable footwear	Ensure employees choose suitable footwear, particularly with the correct type of sole.
Water being brought into site	Ensure that all entrances to the building are provided with suitable absorbent matting.
Items stored in foot wells/access routes/ stairwells or in fire escape routes	Remove all items to storage facilities, conduct regular inspection of site environment.