



Workplace Safety

10 Steps to Prevent Slips, Trips and Falls in the Workplace

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When considering safety and compliance issues in the workplace, slips, trips and falls often rise to the top of the list. The reason for this is clear — slips, trips and falls can lead to serious injuries, citations, financial implications, and greatly impact the efficiency and productivity of your facility. Slips, trips and falls are one of the leading causes of unintentional injuries in the U.S., resulting in one in six lost time injuries and costing an average of \$40,000 per incident. These 10 steps can guide you on the ways to prevent slips, trips and falls in your facility.

1. Assess Your Slips, Trips and Falls Needs

Complete an assessment of your facility. Take a look at your past slips/trip/fall incidents by type and location to uncover trends and commonalities. Review your general housekeeping habits. If your facility is noticeably clean and well organized, it is a good barometer that your safety program is working. If certain areas need attention, it's a good idea to step back and drill down to the root cause — it could point to a larger safety issue that would benefit the entire facility. Leverage your safety suppliers' knowledge.

2. Mark Aisles and Passageways

Use heavy-duty, highly visible warning tape and floor tape to mark any uneven walkway and floor surfaces in your facility. Also use floor tape and labels to mark proper locations for tools and equipment storage areas (i.e., pallet jacks, ladders, etc.) to keep them from becoming obstacles in aisles and walkways. If the walkways are exposed to a variety of lighting conditions, use reflective or photoluminescent tape to ensure that they be seen at all times. OSHA requires that aisles and passageways be kept clear and in good repair at all times.

3. Provide Traction on Slippery Surfaces

Keep floors clean and dry where possible. To prevent injuries, make sure your stairs and landing areas are marked with anti-skid floor tape that withstands grease and oil. For added protection, install anti-skid tape with yellow and black stripes and text with the messages "caution" or "watch your step."

4. Improve Stair Safety

You can do this by keeping stairways clean and dry, applying reasonably slip-resistant treads and stair nosing with a non-slip finish, and using anti-skid cleats to mark stairs.

5. Mark Emergency Evacuation Routes

To allow employees to quickly and safely exit the building in an emergency, exit signs, emergency egress signs and a path towards the exit should be clearly marked. Glow-in-the-dark floor and stair markings and directional signs can help lead the way for safer evacuation.

6. Post Safety Signs and Labels

With warning signs at the point of need, you can warn workers at-a-glance of any nearby hazards, including equipment leaks, uneven surfaces or other potential obstacles. Effective signage includes a clear header, bright colors, bold text, languages aligning with workforce needs and intuitive infographics.

7. Warn of Temporary Hazards

When there's a short-term hazard due to maintenance, housekeeping or a spill, mark the area with cautionary floor stands, barricade tape, and warning posts and chains.

8. Inspect Scaffolding and Ladders

Establish a standard for frequently inspecting scaffolds and ladders for damage, faults and wear. This should include the use of scaffolding tags and inspection tags. Make sure that those inspection tags include the inspection date, the name of the authorized employee who performed the inspection and the required date of the next inspection.

9. Control and Clean Oil and Spills

When faced with spills, it's critical to have a process to detect, assess and correct that spill as effectively as possible. Keeping both absorbents and spill kits on hand can help you tackle spills quickly and effectively.

10. Train Your Employees

To achieve the greatest level of effectiveness, employees need to understand why slips, trips and falls occur. They also need to understand how to minimize their likelihood and how to respond when one occurs. By providing employees with the tools, training and support they need to effectively prevent and respond to slips, trips and falls, you're taking the right steps to avoid employee injuries, declines in productivity and the costs associated with an incident.

With these steps in mind, you're ready to implement the processes, products and training needed to help prevent slips, trips and falls.

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