



A Brief Guide to Prevent Slips, Trips and Falls



The most recent JIB Survey of Accidents at Work published in 2023, highlighted slips, trips and falls as by far the most common cause of accident amongst JIB Member Companies. This brief guide is designed to respond to the results of the survey and help reduce accidents in the future.

What the law says:

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 sets out the requirement for employers to ensure the health and safety of their employees and anyone who may be affected by their work, so far as is reasonably practicable. This includes taking steps to control slip and trip hazards.

Employees have a duty not to put themselves or others in danger and must use all safety equipment provided by their employer.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to assess risks and where risks are identified, take action to address them.

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 require floors to be suitable, in good condition and free from any obstructions. People should be able to move around safely.

Risk Assessment:

Employers are required by law to carry out Risk Assessments. A Risk Assessment enables sensible action to be taken to control risks in the workplace. Effective control measures can be used to prevent all types of accidents including slips, trips and falls.

The Health and Safety Executive website provides case studies and template forms to help responsible persons complete a risk assessment. These can be found by visiting:

www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm



The following **SIX** guidelines will help to create a safer working environment.



1. Create Good Housekeeping Practices

Good housekeeping is critical. Safety and housekeeping go hand-in-hand. If your facility's housekeeping habits are poor, the result may be a higher incidence of employee injuries and increasing insurance costs. If an organisation's facilities are noticeably clean and well organised, it is a good indication that its overall safety program is effective as well.

Proper housekeeping is a routine. It is an ongoing procedure that is simply done as a part of each worker's daily performance. To create an effective housekeeping program, there are three simple steps to get you started:

- **Plan ahead**– Know what needs to be done, who has responsibility for the task and how the particular work area should look when the task is completed.
- **Assign responsibilities**– It may be necessary to assign a specific person or group of workers to clean up, although personal responsibility for cleaning up after himself/herself is preferred.
- **Implement Procedures**– Establish housekeeping procedures as a part of the daily routine.



2. Reduce Wet or Slippery Surfaces

Slips, trips and falls account for a significant portion of injuries reported in recent JIB Accident Surveys.

Traction on outdoor surfaces can change considerably when weather conditions change. Those conditions can then affect indoor surfaces as moisture is tracked in by pedestrian traffic. Traction control procedures should be constantly monitored for their effectiveness.

- Keep car parking areas and pedestrian walkways clean and in good repair condition.
- When snow and ice are present, remove or treat these elements. In some extreme cases, it may be necessary to suspend use of the area.
- Use adhesive striping material or anti-skid paint whenever possible.
- Indoor control measures can help reduce the incidence of slips and falls.
- Use moisture-absorbent mats with beveled edges in entrance areas. Make sure they have backing material that will not slide on the floor.
- Display "Wet Floor" signs as needed.
- Use anti-skid adhesive tape in troublesome areas.
- Clean up spills immediately. Create a procedure for taking the appropriate action when someone causes or comes across a food or drink spill.
- Use proper area rugs or mats for food preparation areas.



3. Avoid Creating Obstacles in Aisles and Walkways

Injuries can also result in from trips caused by obstacles, clutter, materials and equipment in aisles, corridors, entranceways and stairwells. Proper housekeeping in work and traffic areas is still the most effective control measure in avoiding the proliferation of these types of hazards. This means having policies or procedures in place and allowing time for cleaning the area, especially where scrap material or waste is a by-product of the work operation.

- Keep all work areas, passageways, storerooms and service areas clean and orderly.
- Avoid stringing cords, cables or air hoses across hallways or in any designated aisle.
- In office areas, avoid leaving boxes, files or briefcases in the aisles.
- Encourage safe work practices such as closing file cabinet drawers after use and picking up loose items from the floor.
- Conduct periodic inspections for slip and trip hazards.



4. Create and Maintain Proper Lighting

Poor lighting in the workplace is associated with an increase in accidents.

- Use proper illumination in walkways, staircases, ramps, hallways, basements, construction areas and dock areas.
- Keep work areas well lit and clean.
- Upon entering a darkened room, always turn on the light first.
- Keep poorly lit walkways clear of clutter and obstructions.
- Keep areas around light switches clear and accessible.
- Repair fixtures, switches and cords immediately if they malfunction.



5. Wear Appropriate Footwear

The footwear we wear can play a big part in preventing falls. The slickness of the soles and the type of heels worn need to be evaluated to avoid slips, trips and falls. Shoelaces need to be tied correctly. Whenever a fall-related injury is investigated, the footwear needs to be evaluated to see if it contributed to the incident. Employees are expected to wear footwear appropriate for the duties of their work task, particularly on building sites where steel toe capped work boots with mid-sole protection are required.



6. Individual Behaviour

This condition is the toughest to control. It is human nature to let our guard down or be distracted by random thoughts or doing multiple activities. Being in a hurry will result in walking too fast or running which increases the chances of a slip, trip or fall. Taking shortcuts, not watching where one is going, using a mobile phone, carrying materials which obstructs the vision, wearing sunglasses in low-light areas, not using designated walkways and speed are common elements in many on-the-job injuries. Action such as using the handrail each time we take the stairs, demonstrates our commitment to safety and the wellbeing of everyone around us.



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