

HSE SAFETY CORNERSTONES

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Stop Slipping: How to Prevent the Most Common Cause of Workplace Injury

Whether it be a slippery surface, damaged floor coverings (eg a rug or carpet), improperly stored equipment or a dimly lit area, a wide variety of hazards can contribute to slips, trips and falls in the workplace. What's more, slips and trips take the top spot as the most common cause of work-related injury across industry lines, according to the HSE. In fact, over 30 per cent of non-fatal workplace injuries occurred due to slips, trips and falls in 2018. Further, slips and trips accounted for over 20 per cent of non-fatal workplace injuries that resulted in more than a seven-day employee absence.

Put simply, this common cause of work-related injury can lead to significant consequences within your organisation, including increased absenteeism, decreased productivity, staff shortages and reputational damage. Don't let a largely preventable cause of injury wreak havoc within your workplace. Regardless of industry, consider the following tips to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls at your organisation:

- **Prevent floor contamination**—Floors can become contaminated by spillages, leaks, materials carried indoors (eg snow and ice) from the bottoms of shoes and improper cleaning methods that result in a slippery surface. Keep your organisation's floors both clean and safe by installing floor entrance matting, performing routine maintenance on building fixtures and machinery to reduce spills and leaks, enforcing proper cleaning procedures and using appropriate hazard signage in the presence of slippery surfaces.
- **Analyse organisational risks**—Each business possesses specific workplace risks that could lead to slip, trip and fall hazards. Be sure to consider potential slip and trip risks in your routine risk assessment, and implement safety policies and procedures to reduce or eliminate possible hazards. This could include adding non-slip footwear to your dress code policy, requiring safe storage practices for hazardous equipment (eg cables) and encouraging employees to avoid rushing.

Construction Company Fined Following Employee Death

An engineering contractor received a fine after an employee died during a major construction project. The employee was working on the construction site when he was struck by a wheeled excavator, which was slewing after it had been refuelled.

Further investigation revealed that the contractor had failed to ensure a safe system of work for the refuelling of on-site plant equipment, despite labelling it as a high-risk activity in his risk assessment documentation.

As a result, the contractor received the following sentencing:

- **The contractor pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 13(1) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and has been fined £600,000.**

