

By the Numbers – Spill Prevention

SPILL PREVENTION

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2015, 18% of 477 HSA workplace visits found that in work areas not exposed to the weather, the STF risk assessment had not identified/ put in place reasonable precautions to prevent spills.

In 2015, formal action including use of enforcement notices occurred in HSA workplace visits where the employer failed to put in place reasonable precautions to prevent spills.

From 2015 to 2016, 24% of over 2,000 HSA workplace visits found the employer had not identified or tried to identify sources of potential spills (for example, liquids, granular material, food).

In 2012, floor mats were not relevant in about half the HSA visits where examined. This is probably because these workplaces have wet-working areas and large external working areas.

In 2012, 35% of 1,783 HSA workplace visits found the employer did not have a procedure that floor mats are used to reduce slip risks.

In 2012, 22% of 2,106 HSA workplace visits found the employer did not have a procedure that spills should be removed straight away by dry cleaning.

Across all industries, a procedure to remove spills straight away by dry cleaning was found in 46% of workplaces and absent or not applicable in 54%.

What Percentage of Workplace Accidents are Caused by Slips, Trips, and Falls?

More than **25%** of all injuries sustained across all industries are caused by slips, trips, and falls. Of these slips, trips, and falls, **16%** of all workplace accidents involved falls on the ground level. Unfortunately, more than **5%** of workplace accidents resulted from a fall between two or more stories.

Note the interesting statistic related to slips and trips **without falls**. More than **3%** of all workplace accidents that resulted in time away from work were caused by slips and trips **without a fall**.

According to [OSHA](#), **20%** of all fatalities in private industry were related to construction in 2017. Of these deaths, nearly **60%** were caused by four events, known in the industry as *The Fatal Four*.

1. **Falls:** 39% of deaths in construction
2. **Struck by Object:** 8% of deaths in construction
3. **Electrocutions:** 7% of deaths in construction
4. **Caught in or between:** 5% of deaths in construction

Reducing or eliminating the risk from these four causes of death would save hundreds of lives every single year. In fact, there were [887 workplace fatalities in 2017 due to falls, slips, and trips](#). Let's explore some of the leading causes of falls on the job site and ways to prevent them.

Leading Causes of Slips and Falls on the Job

Any job site has its share of hazards and unfortunately, nothing can entirely remove the risk out of workplace injuries and illnesses. According to the CDC, more than **300** construction workers die each year and more than **10,000** more are seriously injured by falls from heights.

The CDC also cites ladders, roofs, and scaffolding as leading causes of slips, trips, and falls on job sites.

Here are some other statistics related to slips, trips, and falls while on the job:

5. **57%** of deaths from ladders occur in the construction
6. **43%** of deaths from slips, trips, and falls occur in the construction
7. **20%** of falls on the same level are due to **trips** and **13%** are due to
8. **11%** of falls to a lower level happen when someone **falls through a surface or existing opening.**

In Canada over 42,000 workers get injured annually due to fall incidents. This number represents about 18% of the “time-loss injuries” that were accepted by workers’ compensation boards or commissions across Canada (based on statistics from Association of Workers’ Compensation Boards of Canada, 2016).

Statistics show that the majority (67%) of falls happen on the same level resulting from slips and trips. The remaining 30% are falls from a height.

KEEP IN MIND

- Analyze previous slips to identify any particular issues
 - Use the [Mapping tool](#) designed to help identify areas where slips, trips and falls have happened and also where slips and trips are more likely to happen
 - Consider asking staff if they are aware of any problems or if they have slipped in the past
- Identify [sources of](#) e.g. equipment using water/ liquid, wash-up, showers, cleaning store, toilets, grapes, flowers, plants, deep fat fryers
 - Include self-service drinks areas, walk-in chiller and freezers, liquid containers, liquid too close to the

front of shelves, small fruit and vegetable items and flower displays

- Don't forget hanging baskets
- Viscous liquid spills can be much more hazardous. As the viscosity of a likely spill increases, the surface roughness required increases
- Ensure you consider all solid/ semi-solid material, e.g. granular washing powder, inserts from newspapers magazines, desiccant sachet contents,
- In 2009, the Slip STD Consortium proposed a [classification](#) for hard floors based on foreseeable contamination

Prevent Spills to Control Slips (Trips and Falls)

- Consider using contoured/molded pallets for liquid container storage and display – to reduce the risk of containers being knocked over
- Display/ store liquids so spill not likely to get onto walkways. Do not put containers of liquid too close to the front of shelves
- Store containers, particularly of liquid, with the opening on top – unless specifically designed to be stored with the opening on the side or bottom
- Consider the use of [floor mats](#) near liquid containers. This may also help reduce losses through breakages
- Merchandising material & paper/ magazine inserts can be slippery
- Provide containers for customers to carry their goods
- Maintain equipment and pipework in good working order with proper seals and valves
- Small fruit/vegetable items such as grapes and tomatoes, may be high Provide [floor mats](#) or display items pre-packed
- Use only the minimum amount of water in flower display buckets and use [floor mats](#) if required
- Dispose of packing material and other wrappings carefully. Do not leave them lying around the floor

Remove Spills to Control Slips (Trips and Falls)

- Deal with spills straight away
- Spills should be thoroughly cleaned and dried. **A superficial effort that does not clean or dry the surface may create a greater risk** than the original spill. “Mop-dry” floors can be [very slippery](#)
- Provide material to remove spills at identified [high spill risk areas](#)
- Use absorbent material to soak up the spill or possibly use a [hand-held squeegee vacuum](#)
- Paper towel is effective to clean up small spills
- Oily or greasy spills require detergent solution
- Consider using spill kits – they must be kept fully stocked
- Absorbent material must be removed as soon as it becomes saturated, and more absorbent material used – if needed
- Consider nominating one person each shift to be responsible for spills. (This will only work if that person is advised of any spills and is available to deal with spills immediately)

TIPS FOR CLEANING UP SPILLS IN THE WORKPLACE

When any type of oil or liquid is spilled, it should be taken very seriously and cleaned up promptly. In every workplace, there are different types of substances that could cause a major slip and fall, thus resulting in a worker’s comp claim.

1. USE APPROPRIATE MATERIALS

You will encounter different spills. Use the right materials for the job so you can protect yourself and the people around you. Various spills may require different equipment, but it is best to be prepared for anything in the workplace. Spills should be wiped up, cleaned, and dried before the area is considered safe for work-related activities.

Mopping the area will clean the spill, but it may create a more dangerous area for slip and falls. Your workplace spill station should include:

- Absorbent materials (Rags, towels, cloths)
- Paper towels for small spills
- Detergent Solution for oil or grease spills
- Spill Kits
- Wet floor signs
- Mops
- Squeegee
- Hand-held Squeegee Vacuum

2. KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR LEAKS

Sometimes liquid on the floor doesn't come from a spill. It may have come from a leak in a pipe, ceiling, plumbing, or something else. Keep an eye out for leaks coming from underneath the sinks or from the ceiling. By continually checking this, you could prevent employees or customers slipping and falling.

3. OIL VS. WATER

Make sure that you determine whether the spill is oil or water. Oil is flammable at times and can be more dangerous than water spills. Oil also can produce gas, which would cause a dangerous situation for your workplace.

4. CONSIDER THE SIZE OF THE SPILL

While cleaning the spill, take the size of the spill into consideration. You will have to treat a large spill differently than a small spill. Do not take a paper towel to clean 3 gallons of spilled water. Whatever the size of the spill, clean it with the appropriate equipment.

5. WEAR SLIP RESISTANT SHOES

Lastly, wear the most important piece of your work outfit. [Slip resistant shoes](#) will protect you from slipping while you are trying to do your job. Your shoes alone can lead to the difference

between going to the hospital or going home that day. Do not try to clean a spill without slip resistant shoes on. All of our shoes have been tested to provide optimal slip protection for your feet, so you can be prepared for anything that comes your way.

Here are seven safety tips for office workers to prevent workplace injuries:

6. MAKE SURE YOUR DESK SETUP IS ERGONOMIC

To maintain a neutral posture, your head should be centered over your neck and shoulders, wrists flat and elbows resting comfortably at your side. If your feet won't touch the ground unless you lean forward, use a footrest. See our post on [workplace ergonomics and neutral posture](#) for more information on setting up an ergonomic workstation.

7. TAKE REGULAR BREAKS TO GET UP AND MOVE AROUND

Sitting all day [puts office workers at risk](#) for numerous health problems. [Our warm up and stretching guide](#) gives you easy exercises you can do at work, and you can find more resources on our [Get up and Move page](#).

8. WHEN IT'S SLIPPERY DUE TO ICE AND SNOW, WALK LIKE A PENGUIN WHEN ENTERING AND LEAVING YOUR OFFICE

Winter slips and falls in parking lots are extremely common. To avoid them, walk like a penguin by walking flat footed taking short, slow steps. It's also important to wear sensible footwear and carry only what you can handle. For more information and downloadable resources, visit our [winter slip-and-fall prevention page](#).

9. USE A HEADSET FOR PROLONGED OR FREQUENT PHONE USE

Cradling the phone between your shoulder and ear can cause neck and back pain.

10. KEEP YOUR WORKPLACE TIDY

Clean up spills immediately, keep aisles free of clutter, and tie up or secure cords so they don't pose a trip hazard.

11. DON'T LET ELECTRICAL CORDS CREATE A FIRE RISK

Avoid running electrical cords under carpet or through windows and doorways. Also, don't fasten them with unapproved devices, such as staples.

12. KNOW YOUR OFFICE EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Make sure you know what to do in the event of a fire, storm, violent intruder, medical problem or other emergency.