Slips and Falls – Avoid Slip-Ups Fatality File

Mary O'Malley is a healthcare worker in her fifties. She caught her foot in a piece of torn stair carpet and fell. She was initially diagnosed with a broken finger however she subsequently developed a neurological condition and lost most of the use of her left arm. She has not returned to work and has had to retire as a result. She tells her story.

I've had over thirty years in this job, and I've worked in the same residential care home for the majority of those thirty years. I've enjoyed my work immensely and I don't mind telling you I was known for my dedication, service, and friendliness. Over the years, I've raised thousands of dollars for the care home.

At 7 am one day, I was coming to the end of my night shift. I had been up and down the stairs of the care home countless times that night. I had passed the torn stair carpet without incident up until that point. I had one more job to do that shift, which was to get the residents up for their breakfast.

The torn stair carpet had been known about for months but requests from our Health and Safety Committee to have the carpet repaired or replaced had gone unheeded. The torn section had been repeatedly taped up by our staff, but contractors had removed the covering during renovations earlier that week. So that morning I began to walk up the stairs to get the residents up. As I walked up the first stair I tripped on the torn section of carpet and fell forward. I put out my left hand to brace my fall. As I got up, I didn't feel anything. However, when I looked down, I saw that the top of my ring finger, above the knuckle was now snow white in color and bent upwards towards me.