# Slips and Falls – Avoid Slip-Ups Meeting Kit

## WHAT'S AT STAKE

Slips and falls are a leading cause of workplace injuries. The single most important step to take in preventing slips and falls. Simple…keep floors clean, dry, and free of obstruction. When it comes to safeguards against slips and falls, nothing is more important than good housekeeping.

## WHAT'S THE DANGER

**COMMON CAUSES OF SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS**

- Wet or oily surface.
- Weather hazards including rain, snow, and ice.
- Loose mats.
- Obstructed views.
- Poor lighting.
- Clutter
- Uncovered wires and cables.

**INJURIES FROM SLIP, TRIPS AND FALLS**

**Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBIs):** TBIs happen when a person hits their head on the ground when they fall. Brain injuries can range from minor injuries small concussions, bumps, and bruises to major injuries like skull fractures, hematomas, and subarachnoid hemorrhage.

**Spinal Cord Injuries:** Spinal cord injuries can happen when a person hits the ground with their back or twists and overexerts themselves to avoid a fall. Spinal cord injuries can include slipped discs, hernias, and even paralysis.

**Broken Hips Or Pelvis:** Broken hips and pelvis bones are a common

injury senior citizens sustain from a fall. Hip and pelvis fractures almost always require surgery.

**Shoulder Or Neck Injury:** Shoulder and neck injuries result from landing on your shoulder or neck from a fall. Neck injuries can range from muscle sprains to spinal injuries to even paralysis.

**Limb fractures:** Limb fractures happen when the force of the impact breaks a bone in a person's arms or legs. After surgery, people have to wear casts for months that limit their ability to function in their daily lives.

**Torn Ligaments, Tendons, And Muscles:** These are extremely painful injuries and usually require surgery and years of physical therapy.

# HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

**BEST SLIP, TRIP AND FALL SAFETY PROTOCOL FOR THE WORKSITE**

1. **Keep walking surfaces clean and free of clutter.** By keeping walkways clear, you can quickly reduce the potential for injury. An unobstructed path minimizes the opportunity for an employee to trip over an unexpected object and reduces the potential for a fall that could create a dangerous slipping hazard.
2. **Stairways & Handrails.** Stairs are a common area for falls in the workplace. Be sure to keep your stairwells clear, well lit, and free from unsecured objects.
3. **Manage cords.** Power, internet, and phone cords creates a sea of obstacles for employees and customers. Run cables behind walls or under carpets to keep them hidden.
4. **Footwear.** Are workers wearing footwear that is appropriate for their specific work conditions?
5. **Lighting.** Proper lighting inside and outside of the workplace can help illuminate areas that may be common places for employees or customers to trip or fall.
6. **Signage.** A sign indicating a step, gap, uneven ground, or loose rocks will call attention to the hazard and increase awareness and attentiveness. Using reflective tape can also

highlight problem areas.

7. **Step stools.** Provide ladders and accessible step stools to reduce the chances of a fall by helping employees reach heights safely.
8. **Check floor conditions, inside and out.** Make sure there are no cracks or holes in building flooring or in the pavement outside.
9. **Non-skid throw rugs on slippery surfaces.** Add non-skid throw rugs to help reduce accidents. Make sure to add non-skid padding underneath the rug to prevent it from slipping out from underneath someone.
10. **Clean up spills immediately.** If you have a spill, clean it up immediately. When a spill occurs, immediately place warning signs around the hazard and then tackle the cleanup process.

**GOOD HOUSEEKEEPING SLIP, TRIP AND FALL CHECKLIST**

- Clean up spills immediately.
- Mark areas that have spills and are wet until they are cleaned and dry.
- Mop or sweep debris from walking surfaces.
- Make sure walkways are free of clutter and obstacles.
- Making sure the work area and walkways are well lit.
- Clean your area as you work don’t leave the mess for others to clean.
- Salt sidewalks, parking lots, and other highly traveled areas during winter.
- If you see something you might slip or trip on, tell your supervisor right away.
- Clear walkways, stairs, and lobbies of a tripping hazard, such as cords, wires, boxes, and clutter.
- Make sure that floor mats lay flat rather than wrinkled or bunched.
- Use handrails when you walk up and down steps.
- Before using any ladder or stepladder, make sure it opens fully.
- Check that ladder extensions are fully locked and ladder legs are stable on, non-slippery surface.

- Clean off any slippery material on the rungs, steps, or feet of a ladder before you use it.
- Don’t go over the load limit noted on the ladder.

## FINAL WORD

While slips, trips, and falls can often be attributed to carelessness or clumsiness, the good news is that most accidents are preventable. Proactive attention to hazards will ultimately help keep your employees and customers safe and out of harm’s way.