

# Get a grip

## Stop slips & trips



HEALTH AND SAFETY  
AUTHORITY

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Don't underestimate slips, trips and falls.

- Slips, trips and falls account for about one fifth of all notified accidents
- 44% of Injuries Board employer liability awards were for slips, trips and falls (2008)
- One in five slips, trips or falls results in an absence over a month
- Half of workers surveyed believed it is their company's responsibility (not theirs) to prevent slips and trips

Employers, senior managers and employees all have responsibilities to control risks from slips, trips and falls.

### Management should:

- ✓ Commit to tackling slips, trips and falls
- ✓ Commit to and provide the resources to deal with slips, trips and falls
- ✓ Conduct workplace specific slips, trips and falls risk assessment(s). (Analysis of incidents at a workplace may be helpful)
- ✓ Include slips, trips and falls in the safety statement
- ✓ Conduct audits as required to ensure responsibilities are met
- ✓ Provide personal protective equipment (e.g. slip-resistant footwear) if required
- ✓ Ensure appropriate training and instructions (and demonstrations as required)
- ✓ Posters and visual aids can be useful

Employees have an important role in preventing slips, trips and falls.

### Employees should:

- ✓ Report anything dangerous
- ✓ Use and take proper care of any personal protective equipment (e.g. slip-resistant footwear)

Key areas for slips, trips and falls include Spills, High-risk areas, Over-used signs, Environmental cleanliness and Shoes. You can recall these with the acronym SHOES.

### Spills



- ✓ Deal with spills straight away
- ✓ Use absorbent material to soak up the spill
- ✓ Identify areas at high spill risk and locate absorbent materials near likely spills
- ✓ Avoid where possible using a wet-cleaning approach that may just spread the potential danger area
- ✓ 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)
- ✓ Consider using spill kits
- ✓ Ensure slip resistant footwear as needed

### High-risk areas

- ✓ Identify and deal with high-risk areas for slips, trips & falls. Some examples follow:

#### a. Transition areas



(Transition areas are areas with a sudden change in the level of grip)

- ✓ Identify areas where pedestrians move between surfaces with very different levels of grip, e.g. from wet surface to a dry surface or vice versa
- ✓ Take precautions to remove excess moisture from footwear
- ✓ Mats provided must be properly designed / fitted
- ✓ Mats provided must be placed where people actually walk

#### b. Level changes



- ✓ Identify areas where levels change, e.g. slopes, ramps, steps/ stairs, unexpected holes, bumps, drainage channels
- ✓ Ensure slip resistant surfaces
- ✓ Provide proper lighting
- ✓ Highlight changes in level
- ✓ Ensure proper drain covers



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## High-risk areas

- ✓ Keep the top & bottom of stairs clean & tidy
- ✓ Avoid having to carry items on stairs, e.g. by use of dumb waiters

### c. Sources of liquid



(As well as leading to a moist/wet floor, liquid could damage a floor over time)

- ✓ Identify sources of liquid. e.g. equipment using water/ liquid, wash-up, showers, cleaning store, toilets, grapes, flowers, plants, deep fat fryers. Don't forget hanging baskets
- ✓ Use proper mats
- ✓ Ensure adequate local drainage

### d. Cables and hoses

- ✓ Identify trailing cables and hoses
- ✓ Identify poorly sited gas, liquid supply points
- ✓ Identify poorly sited electrical outlets
- ✓ Site electrical outlets to avoid trailing cables
- ✓ Use retractable reels

### e. Damaged flooring/ paving

- ✓ Identify poorly maintained, damaged floors or paving
- ✓ Repair and take steps to prevent future damage

### f. Mats, rugs

- ✓ Identify mats and rugs – decorative or functional
- ✓ Ensure mats and rugs are properly designed/ fitted
- ✓ Use heavy mats
- ✓ Recess mats into flooring
- ✓ Use weighted edges
- ✓ Fix edges in place
- ✓ Highlight edges, e.g. use a yellow colour
- ✓ Where mats deal with a floor that is regularly wet, consider local drainage near mats

### g. Slippery surfaces



- ✓ Identify slippery surfaces
  - ✓ As a rule of thumb, high gloss, highly reflective = high risk
  - ✓ Tests can scientifically assess the slipperiness of floors
- ✓ Consider changing or treating floor surfaces – this might include addition of slip resistant materials
- ✓ Methods such as non-slip strips may assist
- ✓ Chemical treatment (etching) may be possible
- ✓ Pay particular attention to areas that may become slippery during severe weather. Grit or salt may be helpful to deal temporarily with snow or ice.
- ✓ Ensure slip resistant footwear as needed

## Over-used warning signs

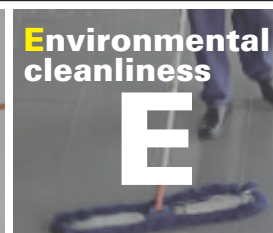


Warning signs do not physically keep people away from wet floors

- ✓ Safety signs do not substitute for necessary protective measures
- ✓ For programmed/ routine floor cleaning, use a system that keeps pedestrians away from wet/ moist floors, e.g. physical barriers
- ✓ Warning signs alone may not be adequate for many circumstances
- ✓ Warning signs must be removed when they no longer apply



**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The text provides typical hazards and control measures that need to be considered when carrying out risk assessments. This document should not be considered exhaustive as no workplace is identical and other hazards not directly involved in the business also need to be considered. This document deals with slips, trips and falls on the same level. For information and advice on falls from height see [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)



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## Environmental cleanliness



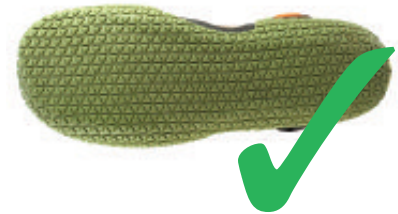
- ✓ Housekeeping is vital - especially when busy
- ✓ Don't leave tidy up until the end of shift
- ✓ Keep floors & access routes clear
- ✓ Keep particularly messy operations away from pedestrian routes
- ✓ Ensure cleaning staff have received proper training, instruction and demonstrations where required
- ✓ Provide cleaning staff with slip resistant footwear
- ✓ Before cleaning, assess the floor to see if cleaning is actually required
- ✓ As far as possible, dry cleaning (e.g. a dry microfibre brush) should replace wet cleaning
- ✓ Clean floors at times when there will be little or no traffic
- ✓ Wherever possible cordon off the floor area being cleaned using a barrier. (Safety signs do not substitute for necessary protective measures)
- ✓ Organise cleaning to provide dry paths through areas being cleaned
- ✓ Where wet cleaning, use water at the right temperature and detergent
- ✓ Remove excess liquid to assist the floor drying process. As far as possible, clean the floor until dry



## Shoes (safety footwear)

- ✓ The General Application Regulations state an employer shall ensure personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided where risks cannot be avoided or sufficiently limited by other means<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ These regulations require that the employer providing PPE should ensure it's properly maintained and replaced as necessary<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ PPE should be provided free-of-charge to the employee<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ For slip resistance, choose a shoe with a well-defined tread pattern, the more edges, the firmer the grip. Good tread pattern and a flexible sole are important
- ✓ Consult with staff when choosing safety footwear
- ✓ Undertake a footwear trial before you buy. Footwear marked 'slip resistant' may not perform well in your work-place
- ✓ Footwear that performs well in wet conditions might not be suitable where there are food spillages. Sole tread needs to be kept clear of waste. If they constantly clog up, the sole design is unsuitable for your work-place
- ✓ With clogs, ensure an ankle strap is in place and used properly
- ✓ If you use safety overshoes, check that they provide adequate slip resistance
- ✓ Put in place routine checks of slip resistant footwear. Check the soles of shoes
- ✓ Put in place a system to replace slip resistant footwear as required

### Use safety footwear that



- ✓ Provides a good grip and good slip resistance
- ✓ Staff have agreed to
- ✓ Staff like and will wear
- ✓ Has a good tread pattern and a flexible sole
- ✓ Has been tested in the actual work-place for slip resistance
- ✓ Is comfortable and fits well (People might not wear uncomfortable shoes.)
- ✓ Is reasonably easy to clean
- ✓ Will be reasonably easy to maintain
- ✓ Will last a reasonable time

### Avoid



- ✗ Open-toed shoes
- ✗ Sandals
- ✗ Flip-flops
- ✗ High heels
- ✗ Smooth soles
- ✗ Clogs with no ankle strap/ heel grip

1 Regulation 62 to 66 of Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 (S.I.No. 299 of 2007)  
 2 Section 8(5) of Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 (No.10 of 2005)





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Location				Date			
<p><b>IMPORTANT NOTE: This checklist is designed to assist businesses conducting risk assessments to address slips, trips and falls in their Safety Statements. There is no legal requirement to use this checklist. The points are not listed in order of importance. Every workplace and risk must be considered on it's own merits taking all factors into account.</b></p>							
<b>Spills</b>	Yes	No	N/A	<b>Over-used warning signs</b>	Yes	No	N/A
Deal with floor spills straight away	Y	N	N/A	Keep pedestrians away from wet floors	Y	N	N/A
Use absorbent material to soak up	Y	N	N/A	Warning signs alone not adequate	Y	N	N/A
Locate absorbent materials near likely spills	Y	N	N/A	Warning signs removed when inapplicable	Y	N	N/A
Avoid wet-cleaning spills	Y	N	N/A	<b>Environmental cleanliness</b>	Yes	No	N/A
Consider using spill kits	Y	N	N/A	Don't leave tidy up until the end of shift	Y	N	N/A
Identify high spill risk areas	Y	N	N/A	Keep floors & access routes clear	Y	N	N/A
				Keep messy operations from pedestrian routes	Y	N	N/A
<b>High-risk areas</b>	Yes	No	N/A	Ensure cleaning staff are properly trained	Y	N	N/A
Identify high-risk areas for slips, trips & falls	Y	N	N/A	Provide cleaning staff with slip resistant footwear	Y	N	N/A
Analyse slip and trip incidents	Y	N	N/A	Assess if floor cleaning is actually required	Y	N	N/A
Identify <b>transition areas</b>	Y	N	N/A	Dry cleaning can replace wet cleaning	Y	N	N/A
• Remove excess moisture from footwear	Y	N	N/A	Clean floors at times when little or no traffic	Y	N	N/A
• Mats properly designed and installed	Y	N	N/A	Cordon off floor being cleaned using a barrier	Y	N	N/A
• Mats where people actually walk	Y	N	N/A	Provide dry paths through areas being cleaned	Y	N	N/A
Identify <b>level changes</b>	Y	N	N/A	Use water at right temperature and detergent	Y	N	N/A
• Ensure slip resistant surfaces	Y	N	N/A	Remove excess liquid to assist floor drying	Y	N	N/A
• Provide proper lighting	Y	N	N/A	<b>Shoes (safety footwear - PPE)</b>	Yes	No	N/A
• Highlight changes in level	Y	N	N/A	Ensure PPE where risks cannot be avoided	Y	N	N/A
• Ensure proper drain covers	Y	N	N/A	Ensure PPE is properly maintained and replaced	Y	N	N/A
• Keep top & bottom of stairs clean & tidy	Y	N	N/A	PPE provided free-of-charge to employee	Y	N	N/A
• Avoid having to carry items on stairs	Y	N	N/A	Consult with staff when choosing safety footwear	Y	N	N/A
Identify <b>sources of liquid</b>	Y	N	N/A	Undertake a footwear trial before you buy	Y	N	N/A
• Repair flooring properly	Y	N	N/A	Replace slip resistant footwear as required	Y	N	N/A
• Use proper mats	Y	N	N/A	Check overshoes provide slip resistance	Y	N	N/A
• Ensure adequate local drainage	Y	N	N/A	Conduct routine checks of soles of shoes	Y	N	N/A
Identify trailing <b>cables and hoses</b>	Y	N	N/A	Sole tread kept clear of waste	Y	N	N/A
• Identify poorly sited gas, liquid supply points	Y	N	N/A	<b>Use footwear that</b>	Yes	No	N/A
• Identify poorly sited electrical outlets	Y	N	N/A	• Provides a good grip and good slip resistance	Y	N	N/A
• Site electrical outlets to avoid trailing cables	Y	N	N/A	• Staff have agreed to	Y	N	N/A
• Use retractable reels for hoses	Y	N	N/A	• Staff like and will wear	Y	N	N/A
• Ensure hoses have no leaking liquid	Y	N	N/A	• Has a good tread pattern and a flexible sole	Y	N	N/A
Identify <b>damaged floors</b>	Y	N	N/A	• Tested in workplace for slip resistance	Y	N	N/A
• Repair & take steps to prevent future damage	Y	N	N/A	• Is comfortable and fits well	Y	N	N/A
Identify where <b>mats and rugs</b> are used	Y	N	N/A	• Is reasonably easy to clean	Y	N	N/A
• Use heavy mats	Y	N	N/A	• Will be reasonably easy to maintain	Y	N	N/A
• Recess mats into flooring	Y	N	N/A	• Will last a reasonable time	Y	N	N/A
• Use weighted edges	Y	N	N/A	<b>Avoid</b>	Yes	No	N/A
• Fix edges in place if potential trip hazard	Y	N	N/A	• Open-toed shoes	Y	N	N/A
• Highlight edges	Y	N	N/A	• Sandals	Y	N	N/A
• Consider local drainage near mats	Y	N	N/A	• Flip-flops	Y	N	N/A
Identify <b>slippery surfaces</b>	Y	N	N/A	• High heels	Y	N	N/A
• Change or treat floor surface	Y	N	N/A	• Smooth soles	Y	N	N/A
	Y	N	N/A	• Clogs with no ankle strap/ heel grip	Y	N	N/A
<b>Specific factors – use the spaces below to address issues specific to your workplace or activities</b>							
	Y	N	N/A		Y	N	N/A
	Y	N	N/A		Y	N	N/A
	Y	N	N/A		Y	N	N/A