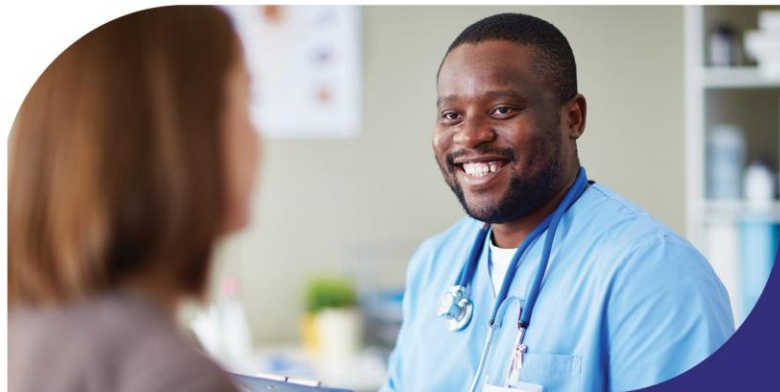




HSA

An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta
Health and Safety Authority

Slips, Trips & Falls in Small Businesses



Eamonn O'Sullivan

March 2026

Slips, Trips and Falls

HSA

An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta
Health and Safety Authority

Introduction

Slips (www.hsa.ie/slips)

Stairs (www.hsa.ie/stairs)

~~Vehicle Slips~~

~~Ice Slips~~

Next



Slips, Trips and Falls (STF)

Every working day, **nine people** hurt in work STF

STF are **second highest** cause of work injuries

22% of STF lead to **over a month off work**
(17% of other accidents)

Slips



www.hsa.ie/slips



Slip Prevention and Risk Assessment Tool



An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta
Health and Safety Authority

STAGE 1 Identify Areas

1. Identify Areas → Area • Worksite • Surface • Date

1	Area	
2	Worksite	
3	Pedestrian surface	
4	Date	

(Combine different areas to get a picture for the entire worksite by using a [Mapline Tool](#) or a spreadsheet.)

STAGE 2 Assess Slip Risks

2. Assess Slip Risks → Contamination • Pedestrian • Surface • Other

		RISK (Impact, Likelihood of Injury)		
		Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
5	Contamination risk (including spills, cleaning and ice)			
6	Pedestrian risk (including access, footwear and behaviour)			
7	Surface slipperiness (including history, note and measurements)			
8	Other Factors (for example, structural risk areas, level changes, foot off)			

STAGE 3 Prevent Slip Risks

3. Prevent Slip Risks → Surface • Contamination • Pedestrian • Other

SLIPPERY SURFACE CONTROLS		ACTION, DATE
9	Deep clean <small>(Concent chemical, physical and thermal energy. May require grip)</small>	
10	Treats <small>(Consider all treatments. Specify expected grip and life. New cleaning regime.)</small>	
11	Resurface <small>(Include non-slip strips etc. Specify expected grip and life. Choose and use carefully.)</small>	

CONTAMINATION CONTROLS		ACTION, DATE
12	Spills <small>(Monitor, identify with mats, drains, catches. Detect and remove spills)</small>	
13	Cleaning <small>(Communicate. Explain wet cleaning. Bechordable. Soaps. Segregate damp surfaces)</small>	
14	Ice <small>(Weather, Activities, Locations, Contamination and Sample Risk Assessment)</small>	

PEDESTRIAN CONTROLS		ACTION, DATE
15	Access <small>(Restrict access. Channel pedestrians to safe walkways. Consider peak times)</small>	
16	Footwear <small>(Where other controls cannot eliminate risk. Consider restrictions. Consult staff.)</small>	
17	Behaviour <small>(Define controls for behaviours like distracted walking. Consider warnings, signs.)</small>	

OTHER CONTROLS		ACTION, DATE
18	Other Controls	

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

Slip Risk Assessment

HSA

An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta
Health and Safety Authority



Slip Risk Assessment



History



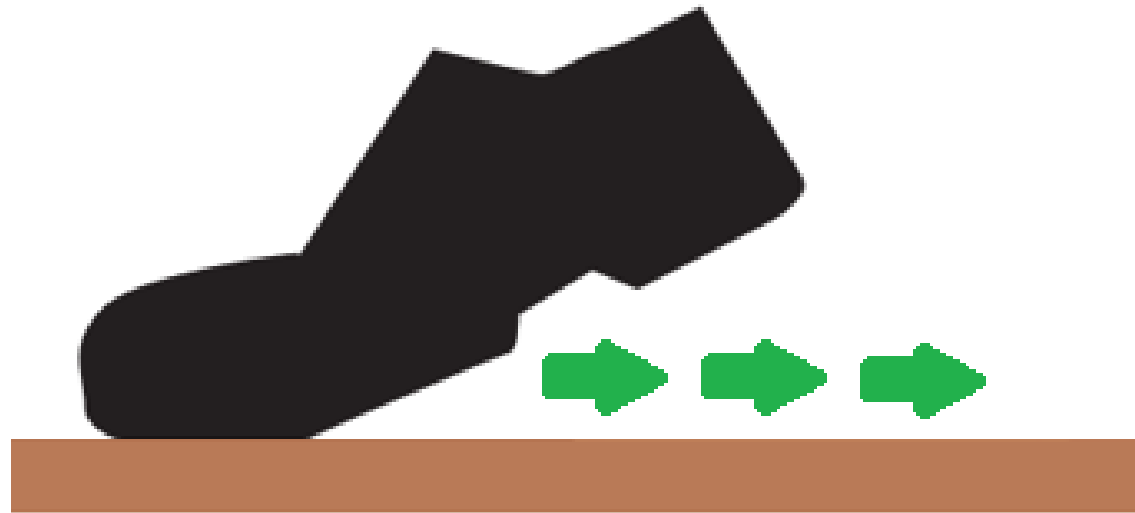
Data



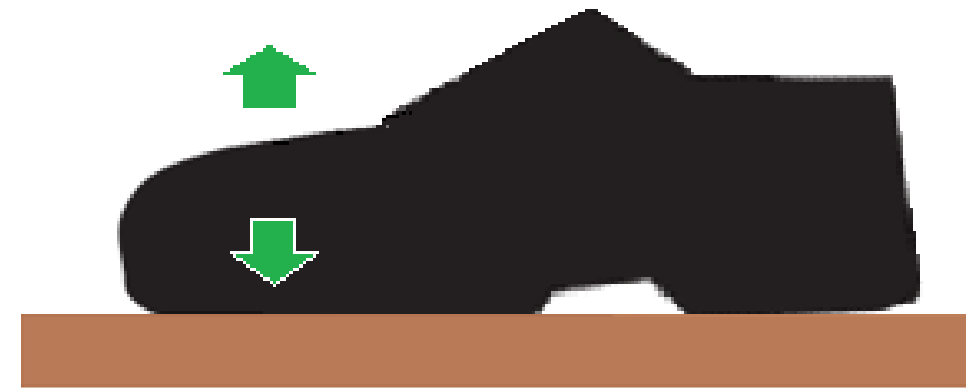
Measurements

Slip Assessment

Moonwalk



Twist

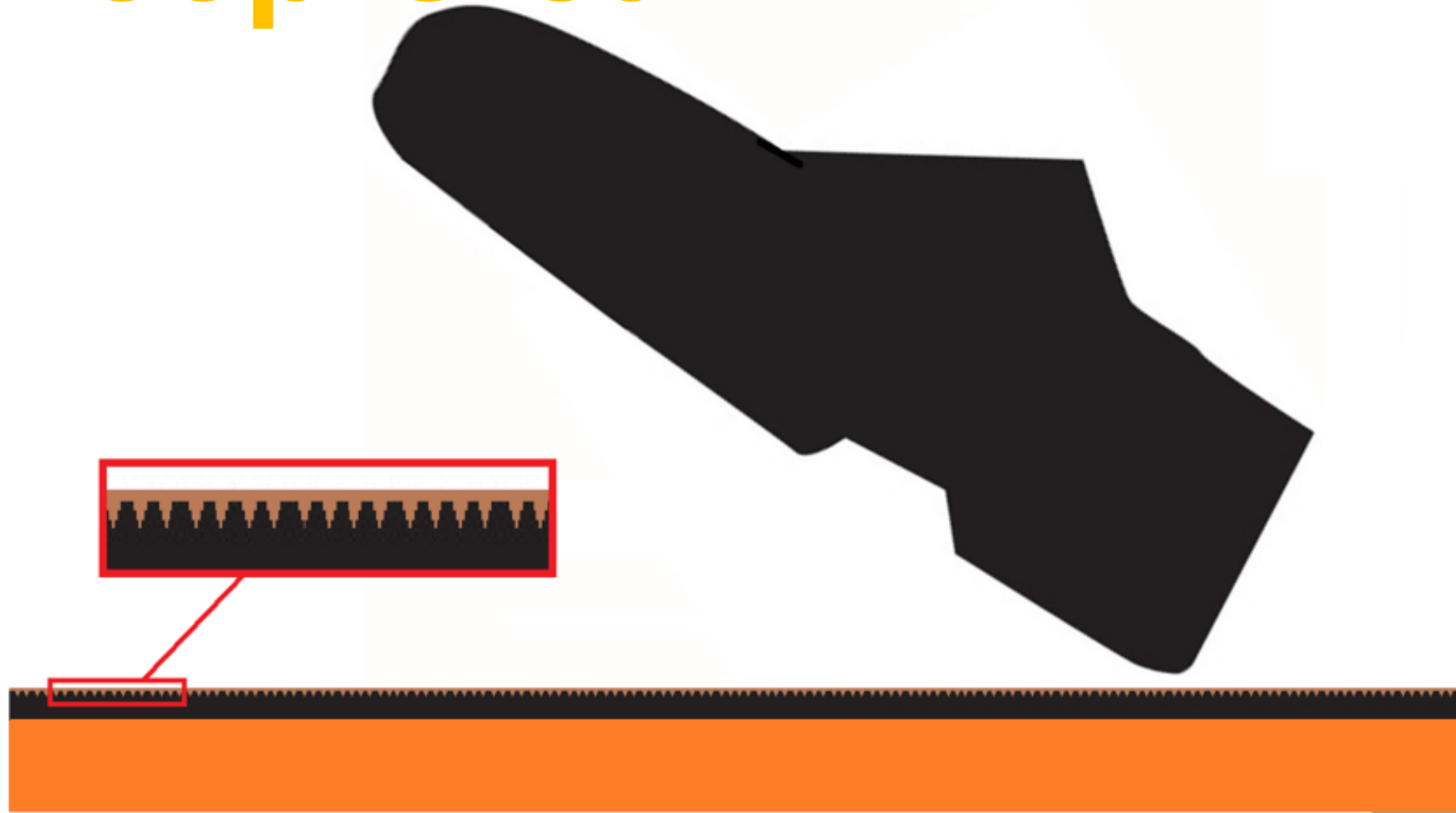


Slip Controls



**Deep
Clean**

Deep Clean



Slip Controls



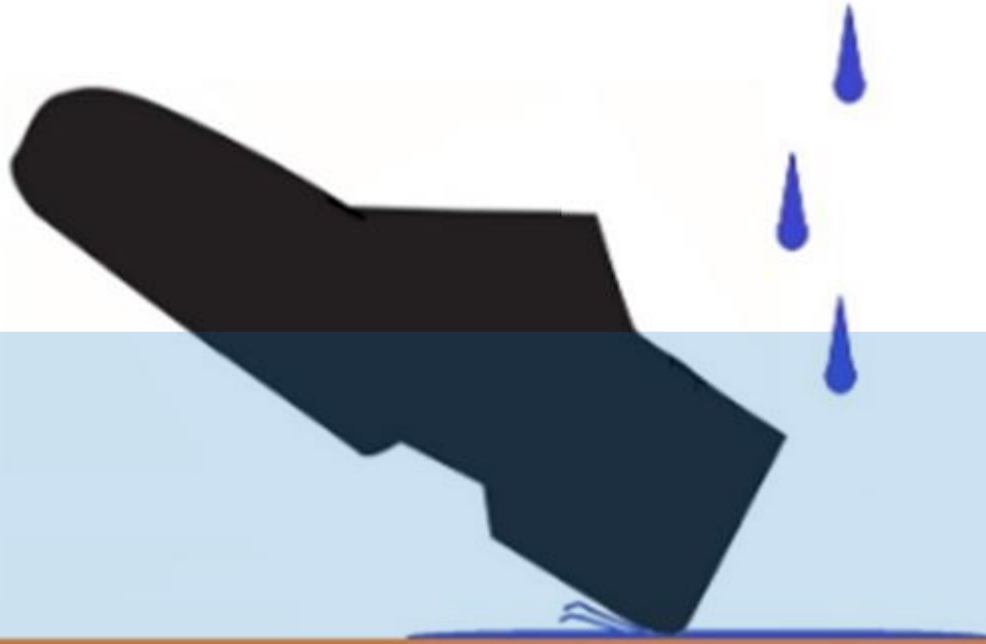
Treat

Slip Controls



Resurface

Slip Risk Assessment



Spills



Cleaning

Floor Cleaning



- › Wet cleaning of slippery floors can lead to slips
- › The vast majority of floor cleaning slip victims are not cleaners

Assessment of Slip Risks from Floor Cleaning

Floor cleaning is an important part of [Slip Risk Assessment and Prevention](#)

A [risk assessment](#) approach to Floor wet cleaning slips (trips and falls)

1. [Identify Risks](#)
2. [Communicate](#)
3. [Replace](#)
4. [Reschedule](#)
5. [Equip](#)
6. [Segregate](#)

Slip Risk Assessment



Spills

Cleaning

Ice

Slip Risk Assessment



Footwear



**Slip-resistant footwear
must be worn**

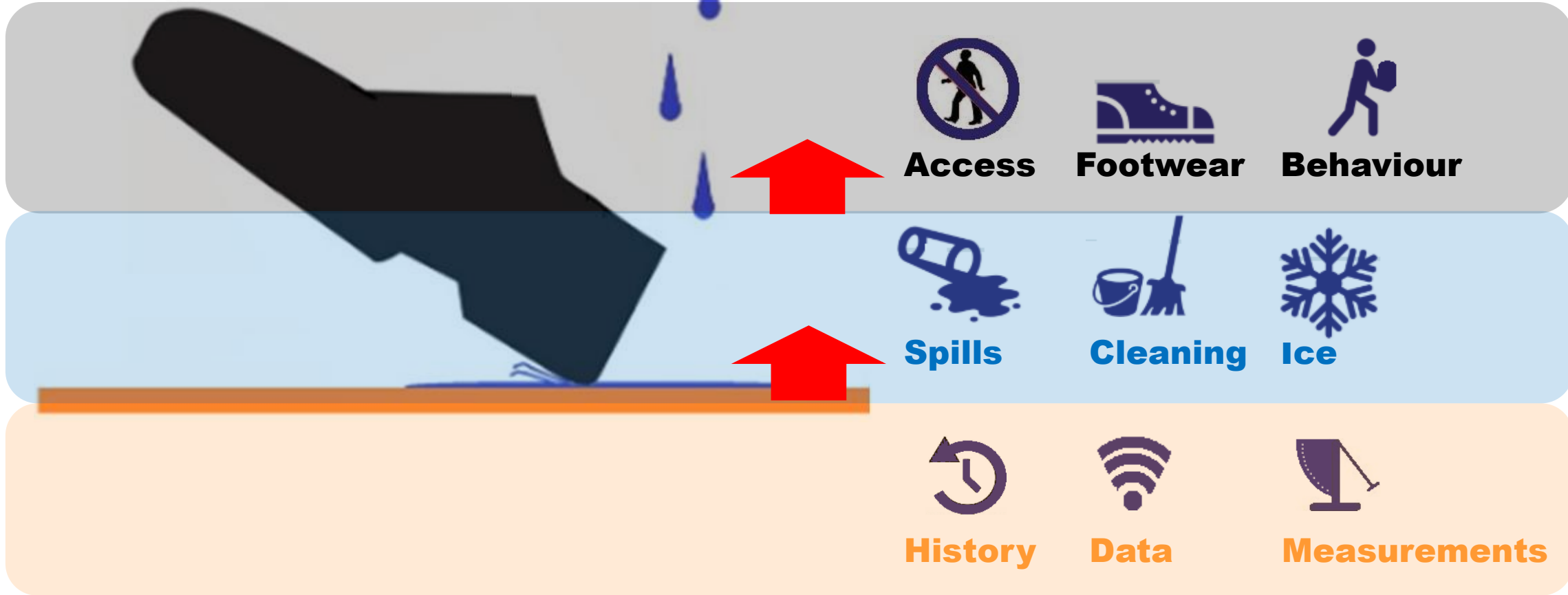
Slip Risk Assessment



Behaviour



Slip Risk Assessment



Stairs



Work Stairs

Every working day one person is hurt in a slip, trip or fall on work stairs or steps

Descending is associated with many accidents

www.hsa.ie/stairs

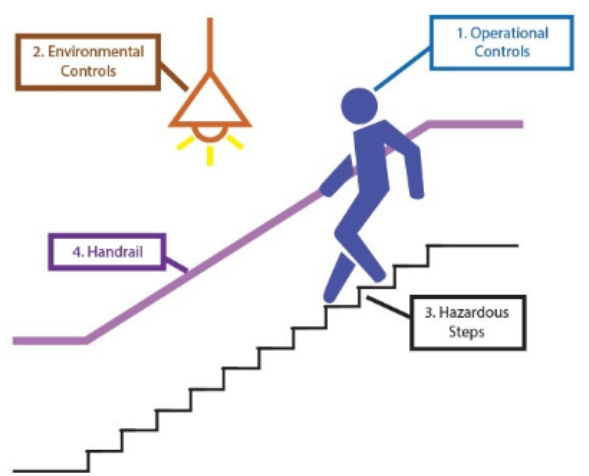


Safer Work Stairs and Steps




Our 30 minute [Safer Stairs and Steps online course](#), CPD Approved, provides advice on the key hazards, including four types of hazardous step and provides advice on the four holistic elements of safer stairs and steps. It provides practical checks for the workplace like the crouch-and-sight test, the foot fit test, visual contrast checks and the step check.

The [Safer Work Stairs and Steps Information Sheet](#) →



- > **Every working day** one person is hurt in a slip, trip or fall on work stairs or steps
- > **Descending** is associated with many accidents
- > **Slips** are more common (than trips or falls)



In 2018 and 2019, Inspectors found that 18% of over 1,200 workplace visits had slips, trips and falls on stairs/ steps not included in the [risk assessment](#). The rate was 52% in Retail.

Risk Assessment does NOT include STF on stairs & step(s)

52%

“Watch Your Step” Safer Work Stairs and Steps Information Sheet

May 2017

Every working day in Ireland one person is hurt in a slip, trip and fall (STF) on stairs and steps at work. Slips are more common. Many STF accidents occur while descending stairs and steps. This information sheet will help employers, the self-employed, employees, suppliers, designers, installers and facility managers understand how to control slips, trips and falls on stairs and steps at work.

What the law requires?

The Building Regulations specify structural requirements for stairs and steps and are enforced by local authorities. Safety legislation specifies general requirements for stairs and steps in the workplace. The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 requires safe access and also requires safe systems of work and training. Work stairs and steps should comply with the relevant Building Regulations and occupational safety legislation. Any structural changes to stairs and steps may require design consideration and must comply with the relevant laws.

There are four interdependent elements of work stairs and step safety. No one element should be considered in isolation. The four holistic elements are:

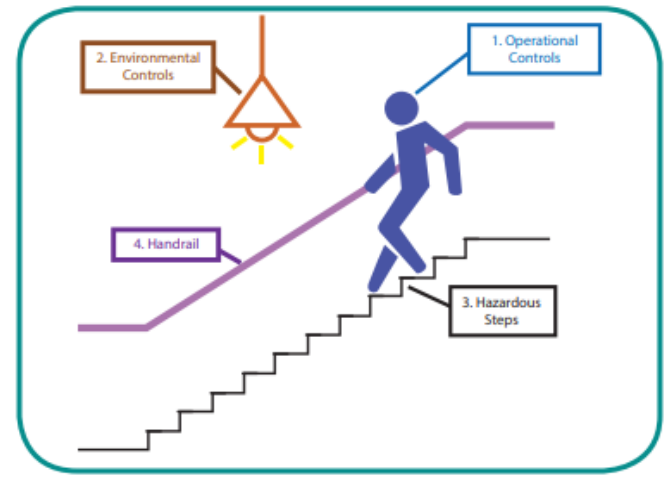


Figure 1: Key elements of work stairs and steps safety



1. Operational
Controls



HSA

An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta
Health and Safety Authority

no one considered in isolation





2. Environmental Controls



1. Operational Controls



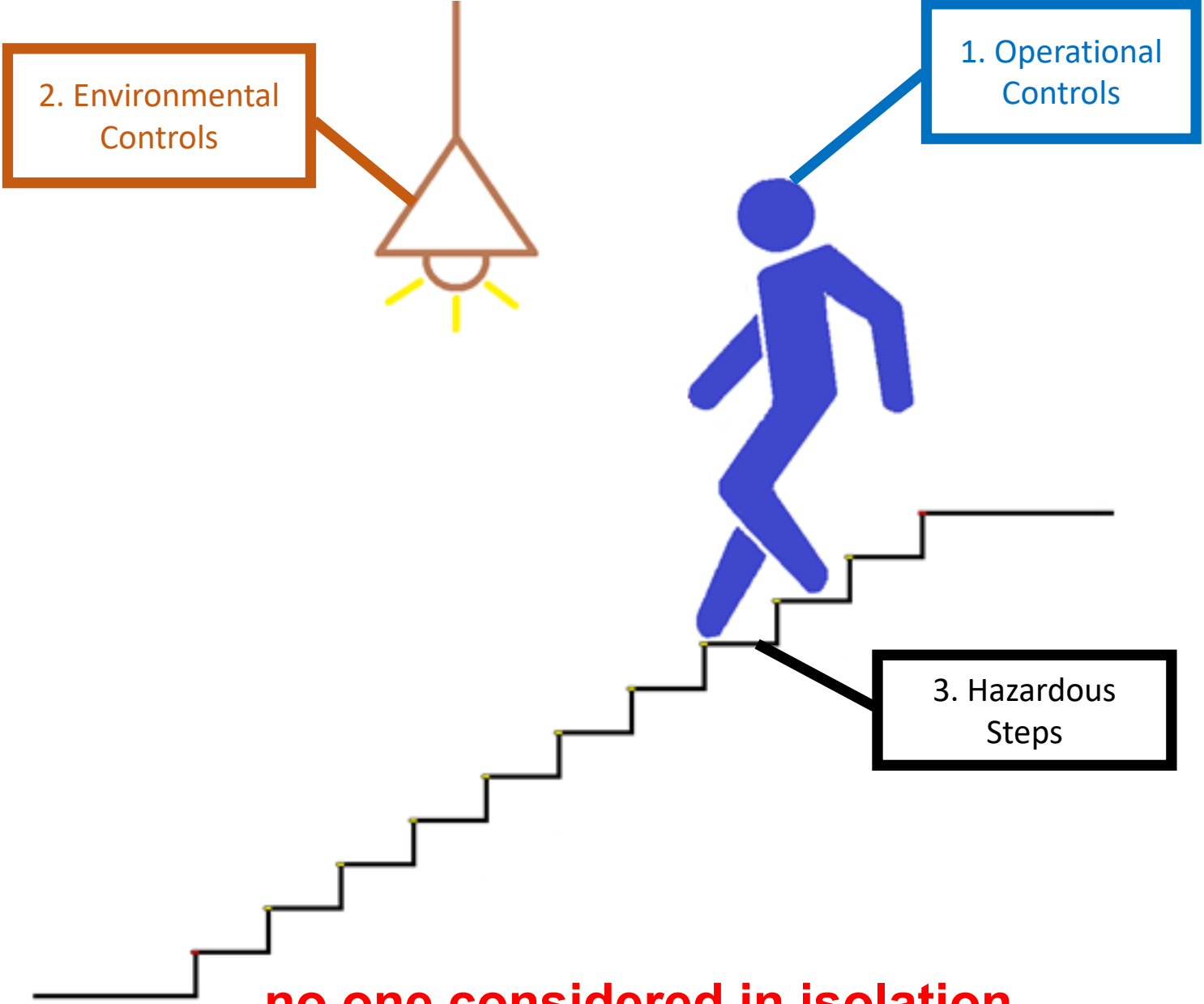
HSA

An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta
Health and Safety Authority

no one considered in isolation



Figure 3: Step nosing position

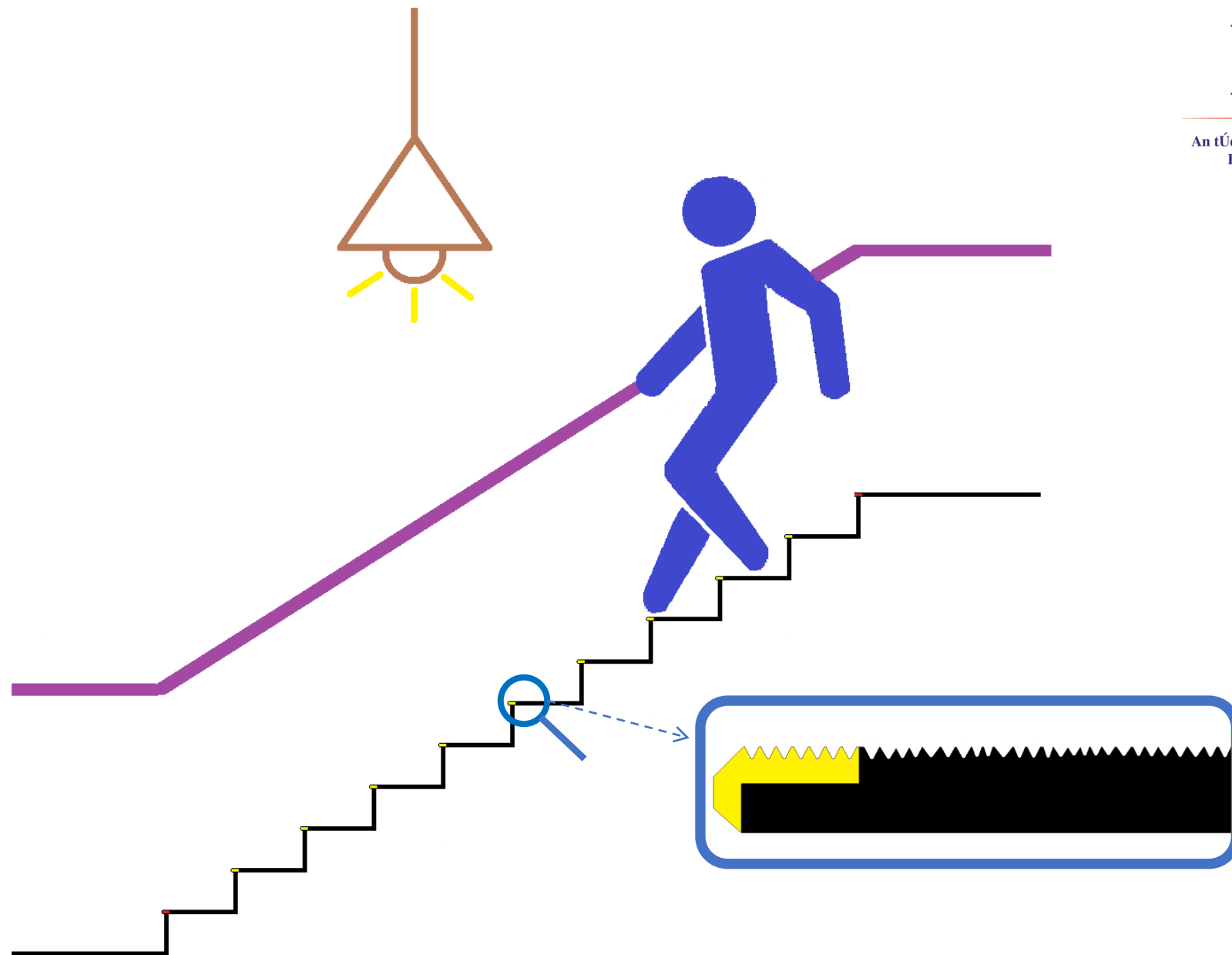


no one considered in isolation

3 Hazardous Steps

a. Slippery step



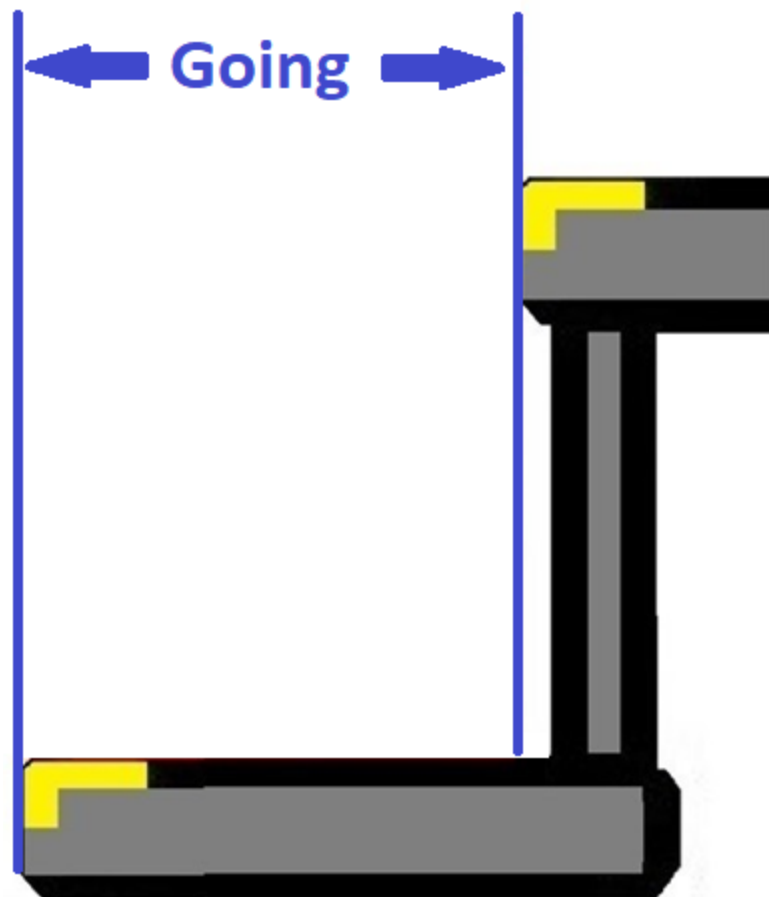


3 Hazardous Steps b. Surprise step



3 Hazardous Steps c. Short step

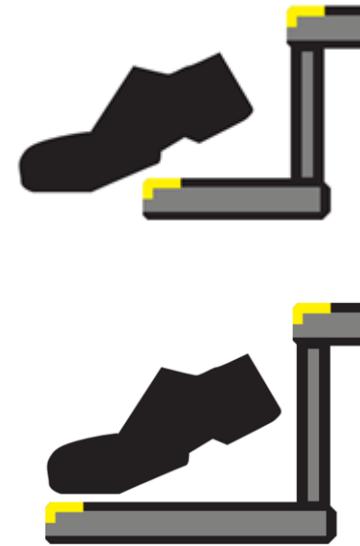




Average male shoe [290mm](#)
[250mm goings](#), large overstep every
10 days

[300mm goings](#), large overstep every
[73 years](#)

▪







**Short
Steps**

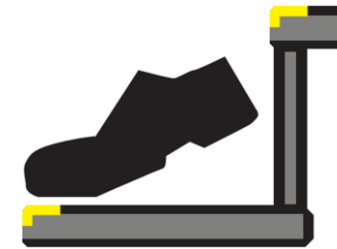
3 Hazardous Steps d. Irregular step



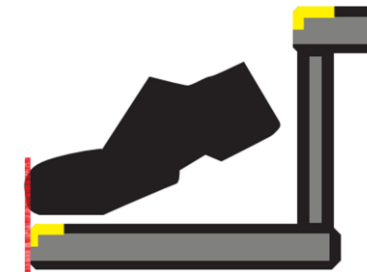
Average male shoe 290mm
250mm goings, large overstep every
10 days



300mm [goings](#), large overstep every
73 years

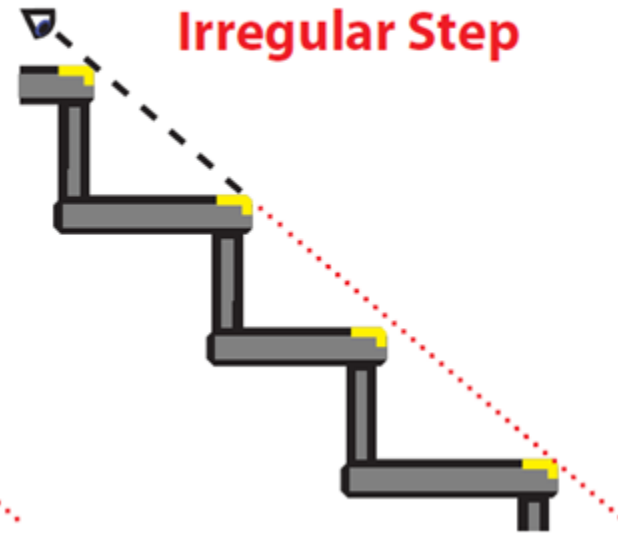
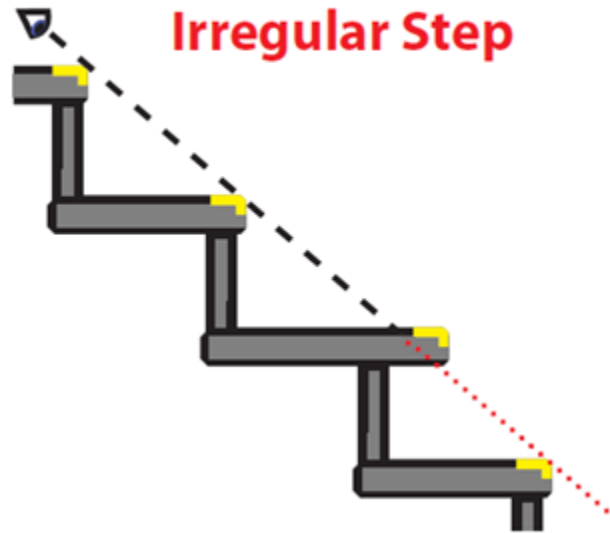
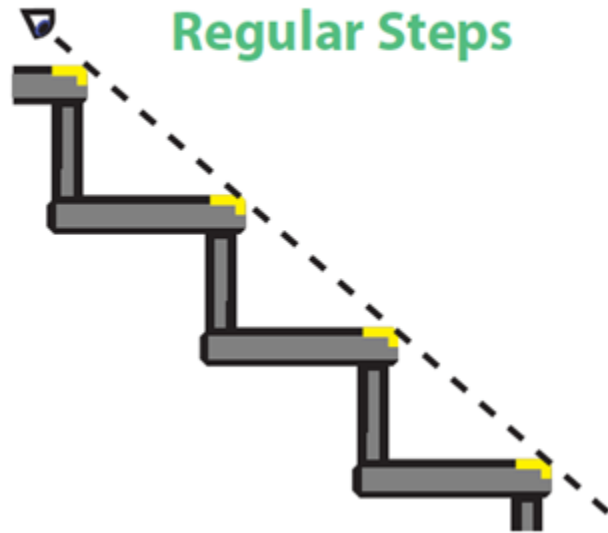


One 300mm [going](#), reduced by 15mm
(less than one cent coin), large overstep every
3 years

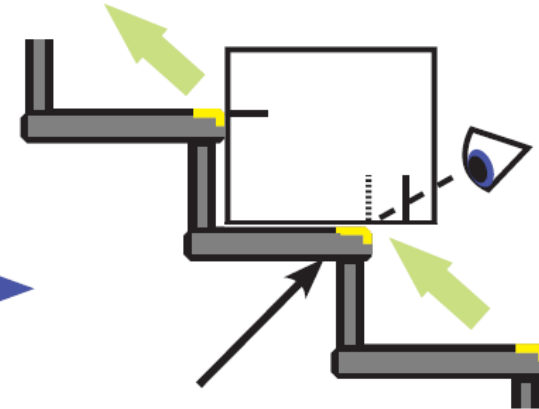
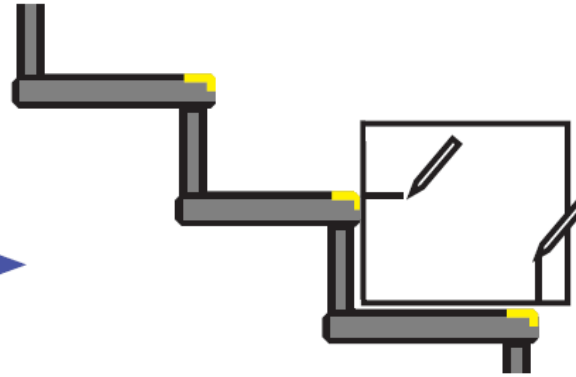


✓ Crouch-and-Sight Check

Crouch-and-sight



✓ Step Check



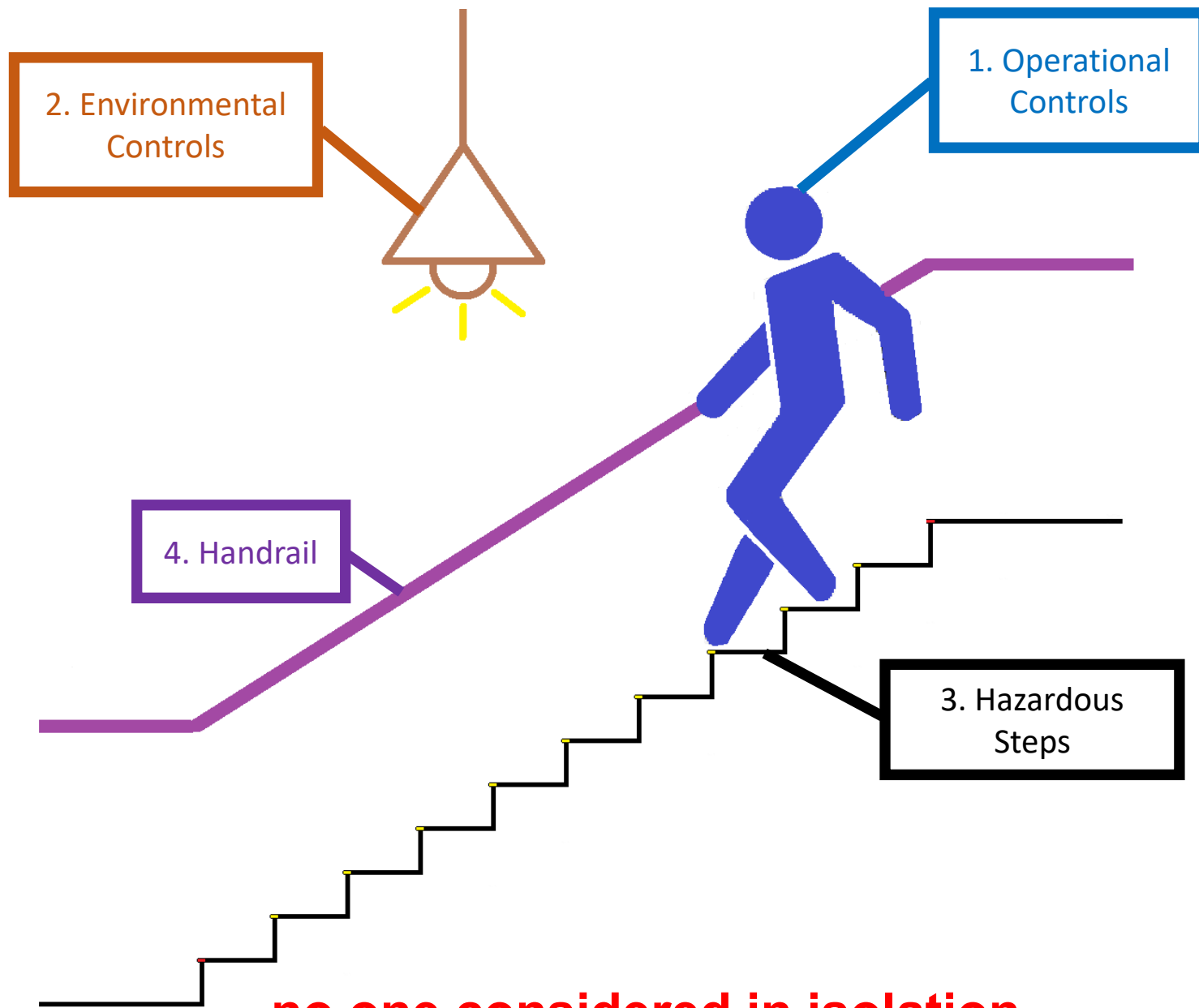
**1. Get envelope,
A4 ream or similar**

**2. Mark rise and going
of bottom step**

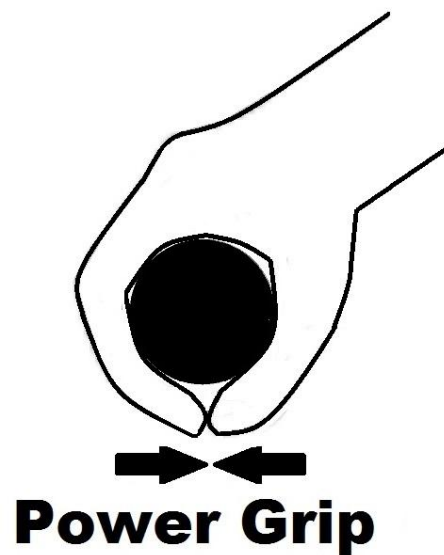
**3. Check all steps
for differences**



**Irregular
steps**



✓ Power Grip Check



Practical On-site Checks



Environment - lighting, distractions, signs, behaviour



Crouch-and-sight



Nosing visual contrast



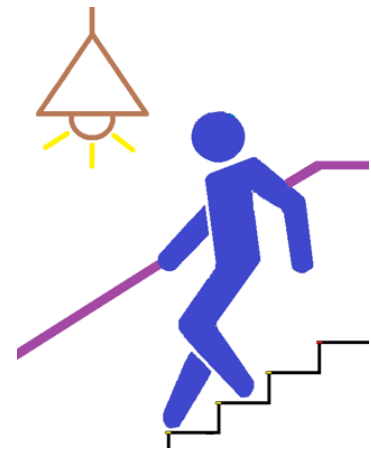
Step-check



Foot-fit



Power grip



Further Advice

www.hsa.ie/slips

Slip Prevention and Risk Assessment Tool SAMPLE

STAGE 1 Identify Areas

1. Identify Areas → Area • Worksite • Surface • Date

1	Area	
2	Worksite	
3	Pedestrian surface	
4	Date	

(Combine different areas to get a picture for the entire worksite by using a [Mapbox Tool](#) or a spreadsheet.)

STAGE 2 Assess Slip Risks

2. Assess Slip Risks → Contamination • Pedestrian • Surface • Other

5	Contamination risk (including spills, cleaning and oil)			
6	Pedestrian risk (including access, footwear and behaviour)			
7	Surface slipperiness (including history, grit and measurement)			
8	Other factors (for example, sudden risk areas, level changes, full off)			

STAGE 3 Prevent Slip Risks

3. Prevent Slip Risks → Surface • Contamination • Pedestrian • Other

SLIPPERY SURFACE CONTROLS		ACTION DATE
9	Deep clean (Correct chemical, physical and thermal energy. Use remote grip)	
10	Tread (Consider all requirements. Specify expected grip and life. New cleaning regime)	
11	Resurface (Include non-slip strips etc. Specify expected grip and life. Choose and use carefully)	
CONTAMINATION CONTROLS		ACTION DATE
12	Spills (Manage spills with mats, drains, sponges, spill kits and remote grip)	
13	Cleaning (Use appropriate cleaning agents, equipment, tools, techniques, etc. to be used)	
14	Ice (Weather, structure, location, communication and specific risk assessment)	
PEDESTRIAN CONTROLS		ACTION DATE
15	Access (Identify access. Clarify pedestrian to safe walkway. Consider peak times)	
16	Footwear (Where other controls cannot eliminate risk. Consider requirements. Consult staff)	
17	Behaviour (Define controls for behaviours like distracted walking. Consider warnings, signs)	
OTHER CONTROLS		ACTION DATE
18	Other Controls	

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

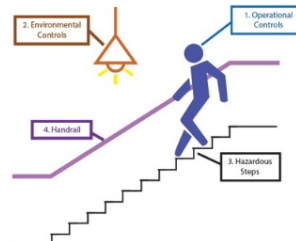
www.hsa.ie/stairs

Online training

Safer Work Stairs and Steps

Our 30 minute [Safer Stairs and Steps online course](#), CPD Approved, provides advice on the key hazards, including four types of hazardous step and provides advice on the four holistic elements of safer stairs and steps. It provides practical checks for the workplace like the crouch-and-sight test, the foot fit test, visual contrast checks and the step check.

The [Safer Work Stairs and Steps Information Sheet](#), provides practical advice on four interdependent elements of safer stairs and steps - **no one element should be considered in isolation**.



- > Every working day one person is hurt in a slip, trip or fall on work stairs or steps
- > Descending is associated with many accidents

www.hsa.ie/ice

Weather

Dublin

9° C

09:00 MET Éireann

Live Weather Update above - click down-arrow to select your location

Ice is mentioned in over 90% of ice (snow) slips, trips and falls. Did you know ["the science behind exactly why ice is so slippery remains something of a mystery"](#)?

- > Over half of workplace ice slips and falls occurred from 6am to 11am
- > Many accidents involved [Walkways](#), [Carparks](#) and [Vehicles](#)
- > In both January 2010 and December 2010 there were over 130 slips at work on ice alone
- > Monitor and act on Met Éireann "snow/ice" or "low temperature" [weather warnings](#), for example, School Transport will be cancelled in Red warning areas

Please

Check slippery floors



Check stairs/steps



Risk assess



HSA

An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta
Health and Safety Authority

Go raibh maith agaibh
Thank you

T: 0818 289 389

E: contactus@hsa.ie

W: www.hsa.ie

