

# Prevent Slips and Trips

## Practical Guide



### WHY

Slips, trips and falls cause injuries in the workplace and accounted for approximately 23.5% of all lost time injuries in Western Australian workplaces over the last five years. This presents a huge cost to the employer and employee both financially and non-financially. Prevention of slips, trips and same level falls in workplaces would significantly reduce injury rates and costs to the employer and employee.

### HOW

Identify the hazards and assess the risks. Consult with employees regarding any concerns with slips and trips in the workplace and recent activities. Inspect and observe the workplace to identify potential areas for congestion, spills, ineffective walkways, obstructions and general housekeeping. Check injury records and incident reports.

### WHAT TO DO

The controls will depend on the cause of risk of slip and trips. Some examples include:

#### 01 Environmental design

- **Design stage** - Eliminate floor level changes, choose appropriate floor surface for the type of work and work tasks, consistent slip resistance between floor changes
- **Appropriate power outlets and management** of cords, cables and hoses to eliminate hazards on floors
- **Minimise risks** from environmental distractions like noise
- **Minimise exposure** to chemicals that may affect balance
- **Adequate space to perform tasks** (e.g. aisle width – general guide minimum of 1m)
- **Install suitable drainage** to eliminate contaminants on floor surfaces
- **Improve lighting** of work areas and use graduated lighting to prevent sudden changes in lighting levels between work areas
- **Clearly mark** walkways, edges of steps and any changes in floor heights or surface types

- **Provide appropriate step, stools and ladders** to access high positioned items

#### 02 Cleaning and housekeeping

- **Good housekeeping practices** clean as you go; keeping access ways clear; prompt spills management; keeping floors clean and dry; regular rubbish removal; appropriate storage
- **Floor cleaning strategies** - outside working hours where practicable or implement systems to prevent people walking on surfaces which are still wet
- **Barricades** for wet or slippery areas

#### 03 Flooring and other surfaces

- **Re-surface or treat** floors to make it less slippery
- **Improve conditions of broken and unstable flooring**
- **Stairs** - adequate depth, even in step heights, with well marked edges and handrails where indicated
- **Mats must not introduce a trip hazard**
- **Trolley ramps** with handrails, mid rails and kick rails on both sides to prevent trolleys from rolling off ramp edge

01: Environmental design

02: Cleaning and housekeeping

03: Flooring and other surfaces

04: People

05: Footwear

06: Contamination and obstacles

07: Work practices and cultures

08: Individual factors

Factors that may cause risk for slips, trips and falls.





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- **Use of dock levellers** in loading docks to reduce risks associated with gaps between surfaces
- **Stair climbing trolleys** to prevent workers carrying items while climbing stairs
- **Safely design and maintain surfaces** of car parks and external walkways

## 04 People

- **Restrict access** to work areas identified as higher risk for slips, trips and falls
- **Training** where appropriate to identify slip and trip risks and prevent

## 05 Footwear

- **Clear footwear policy** (enclosed, stable, well fitted footwear with appropriate soles)
- **Monitoring/supervision** of employee adherence to footwear policies
- **Provision of appropriate safety footwear** may be required in certain workplaces
- **Fit for purpose footwear** to be worn by workers

## 06 Contamination and obstacles

- **Prevent, identify and eliminate leaks** onto floor surfaces e.g. machine maintenance
- **Ensure adequate storage** for goods, trolleys, personal belongings etc. to eliminate clutter
- **Install exhaust systems** to prevent dust or vapours from settling onto floors
- **Maintain/repair** equipment or pipes that are leaking
- **Review storage areas** to reduce/eliminate the need to move items between floors

## 07 Work practices and culture

- **Clear procedures** for reporting hazards
- **Investigate** all slip and trip incidents
- **Regular** workplace inspections
- **Review** work pressures and work pace to minimise risks from rushing and competing demands

## 08 Individual factors

- **Minimise risks** to those with physical limitations and medications that may affect balance
- **Ensure policies are in place** to eliminate the risk from use of recreational substances

FINALLY.....

## REVIEW

Have the controls worked? Consult with employees and re-inspect the work place to decide the effectiveness of the controls.

Slips and trips prevention is an ongoing process.

Prevention reduces cost to business and ensures employees return home safe and well.



Refer to the *Slips, trips and falls risk management worksheet* for further assistance with the risk assessment process

