

9 Tips for Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls in Your Workplace



When prioritizing your safety efforts, it's easy to put addressing hazards that could result in, say, amputations or fatalities at the top of the list and spend little to no time on slip, trip and fall hazards. After all, if a worker slips on a wet floor or trips on a cord, what's the worst that's likely to happen'

The problem with giving slip, trip and fall hazards short shrift is that even non-life threatening injuries such as broken bones and torn ligaments can have a profound impact on a worker's life and keep him out of the workplace for significant periods of time.

In addition, in many workplaces, it's more likely that workers will slip or trip and fall than they'll get caught in machinery, run over by equipment or injured by contact with hazardous materials.

In fact, we recently asked how you'd classify slip, trip and fall hazards in your workplace and found that such hazards are an issue to some extent in the vast majority of companies. Only 22% said they were virtually non-existent. The rest said they were:

- A minor problem (40%)
- A major problem (38%).

The good news is that addressing slip, trip and fall hazards is usually easy and inexpensive to do. Here are 9 tips to help you address such hazards in your workplace:

1. Implement good basic housekeeping practices. For example, keep the work environment clean, with floors and access routes clear of obstacles. (See, Housekeeping Requirements under the OHS Laws.)
2. Ensure adequate lighting levels, positioning lights to ensure all floor areas are evenly lit and all potential hazards, obstructions and spills can be clearly seen.
3. Regularly inspect the workplace for these hazards. For example, floors should be checked for damage and maintenance carried out when necessary to address holes, cracks and loose carpets and mats. (Use this slips, trips and falls inspection checklist.)
4. Ensure that floor surfaces are suitable for the work carried out, such as resistant to oil and chemicals used in production processes. And in areas where water is used, there should be drains to prevent puddles from

forming.

5. Make sure stairways have handrails, slip-resistant covers on steps, high visibility and non-slip markings on the front edges of steps, and good lighting.
6. Clean up spills immediately using an appropriate cleaning method. Use warning signs where the floor is wet and arrange alternative routes.
7. When possible, remove any obstructions that could cause workers to trip or fall. If that's not possible, then use appropriate barriers and warning notices.
8. Practice good cord management. For example, place equipment so power cords don't cross pedestrian routes. And securely fix cords to surfaces.
9. Require workers to wear suitable footwear, taking into account of the type of job, floor surface, typical floor conditions and the slip-resistant properties of the soles.