



Slips and trips

Slips and trips are a common cause of injury. Such injuries can be quite severe and in some cases are disabling. As a result, we continue to see quite a number of claims from members, employees, volunteers and visitors each year.

Obviously, the precautions you will need to take to prevent these needs to be proportionate to your particular circumstances. We appreciate that your premises is not a factory or a building site and is a comparatively low risk environment. However, the age and the use of the building itself, may present particular hazards.

Making a start

Action	Guidance
<p>1. Carry out a thorough inspection of your premises to identify slip or trip hazards.</p> <p>In doing this, consider the difficulty the frail, elderly and disabled may have in negotiating access to and from your premises. Also, consider that some visitors may be unfamiliar with its layout and features.</p> <p>Remember to include any outbuildings and other outside areas such as car parks and paths in your inspection where you have them.</p> <p>Make a note of the hazards you have identified.</p>	<p>If you have completed formal risk assessments, these should have done this for you. The purpose of these is to check that you have complied with your responsibilities under health and safety law. As such, they should identify when and how this applies to you, including any precautions you will need to take. In most circumstances, your assessments should be recorded, reviewed and updated where you suspect that they are no longer valid.</p> <p>Most slips occur as a result of wet or contaminated floor surfaces (e.g. from spillages of food or drink particularly in kitchen areas). Trips are usually caused by poor housekeeping (e.g. trailing cables) or other obstructions such as, concealed kerbs and gravestones or horizontal ledger stones often in churches.</p> <p>Other things to look out for include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• variations in floors or stairs (e.g. irregular steps)• the type of floor materials and coverings (e.g. some are more slippery than others)• worn or damaged floors, steps or coverings (e.g. mats, carpets)• cleaning procedures (e.g. polish can make floors more slippery)• wet or contaminated floors from poor maintenance of the building (e.g. leaking roofs)• poor standards of lighting• the effects of weather (e.g. rain, snow and ice).

Action	Guidance
<p>2. Check that the precautions you have in place are adequate. If they are not, identify any additional ones that are needed.</p> <p>Make a note of these and who will be responsible for taking any additional ones.</p>	<p>Again, where you have completed formal risk assessments, these will do this for you.</p> <p>Simple precautions could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • replacing or repairing cracked or damaged stone flags, ceramic/ clay tiles and wood blocks • highlighting unexpected changes in floor levels • removing worn, damaged or loose floor coverings (e.g. mats, rugs) and fixing down carpets securely • repairing potholes or uneven surfaces in paths, driveways, car parks and steps • providing steps, stairs and steep paths with suitable handrails • avoiding the need for trailing cables (particularly during events or concerts) • providing adequate lighting • ensuring that floors, coverings and steps are regularly cleaned and properly maintained • clearing snow and gritting pathways when the weather is inclement.
<p>3. Make periodic checks to ensure that floors, coverings, steps and pathways remain in good condition, free from obstruction and that any precautions (such as, lighting) remain adequate.</p> <p>Make a note of the checks you make and any issues identified.</p>	<p>You may need to complete more frequent checks before or during events and where the weather is inclement.</p> <p>You will also need to consider how any defects that are identified are going to be put right. If this can't be done immediately and they present a significant danger, you will need to provide additional precautions to guard against this. This may be in the form of barriers, coverings, warning signs etc.</p>
<p>4. Ensure that employees and volunteers are aware of the precautions required to prevent slips and trips.</p> <p>Make a note of any information or training that is provided to individuals.</p>	<p>The level of information and training required will vary depending on the nature of the work and your particular circumstances. If you have completed formal risk assessments, these will help you determine what is necessary.</p> <p>In particular, you may want to advise employees and volunteers how to report any hazards they come across.</p>
<p>5. Document your arrangements and responsibilities preventing slips and trips.</p> <p>Review these where necessary, particularly if you suspect that they are no longer valid.</p> <p>Retain records of the notes you have made in steps 1, 2, 3 and 4 above.</p>	<p>If you have prepared a health and safety policy, record these as part of it.</p> <p>In the event of a claim, paperwork will be important. So, for slips and trips, you should retain the records mentioned. Where you prepare other documentation you should keep these as well. This could include information gathered at the scene of the accident (e.g. sketches/photographs; witnesses statements); investigation documents (e.g. accident book); or specific health and safety documents (e.g. risk assessments; records of maintenance, inspections and other checks; records of information and training provided; policy etc.).</p>

Want to know more?

Where you have employees, including volunteers, you are required to **comply with health and safety law**. Where this is the case, you will need to understand any specific regulations or guidance that may apply in your particular circumstances. For the prevention of slips and trips, the key references are:

- Preventing slips and trips at work, INDG 225(rev 2), HSE available at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg225.pdf

Further useful resources are available at www.hse.gov.uk/slips/index.htm

Risk advice line

(provided by Ecclesiastical professionals or external specialists)

Phone: **0345 600 7531**

Email: risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com

Risk specialists are on hand to advise you on a range of topics, including:

- property protection, security, business continuity planning
- health and safety, food safety, environmental management
- construction safety, fire safety, occupational health, water safety or asbestos.

Available Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm (excluding public and bank holidays).

For further information speak to your insurance advisor or call us on **0345 60 20 999**

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