

Slips, Trips and Falls

According to the Health and Safety Executive, slips, trips and falls (on the same level) are the single most common cause of major incidents in UK workplaces, accounting for 29% of all non-fatal injuries reported under RIDDOR in 2018/19 and equating to 20,070 injuries at work.

The key risk factors are:

- poor lighting that prevents people seeing obstructions, slippery surfaces etc
- damaged or incorrect flooring
- obstructions and objects left lying around
- inappropriate footwear.

Recommendations for employers:

- assess the risks to workers, decide how significant the risks are, prevent or control the risks and develop a clear management plan
- consult with the workforce and their representatives about risk assessments and actions
- ensure everyone is aware of the risk assessments and procedures in place.

Control methods or risk reduction techniques must be used to ensure:

- conditions are correct from the start e.g flooring and lighting are fit for purpose and have the appropriate surface roughness characteristics
- staff are provided with information and training on good working practice
- a programme of planned preventative maintenance is adopted and repairs are undertaken when problems are identified
- that where floors may become wet or contaminated, they are regularly inspected and dried immediately
- spillages are promptly cleaned up
- appropriate signage is displayed when areas are being cleaned and then removed when the floor can be used normally
- all accidents are investigated and staff made aware of the findings and any necessary actions taken.

Legal duties

The key areas of health and safety law relevant to slips, trips and falls are:

- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSWA)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.