

<b>Topic:</b>	Slips and Trips Prevention
<b>Date:</b>	May 2009
<b>Scope:</b>	Guidance Note
<b>Legislation:</b>	Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007
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## 1. Introduction

Over a third of all major injuries reported each year to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) are caused as a result of a slip or trip and are the single most common cause of injuries at work. All University staff can help to reduce slip and trip hazards through good health and safety arrangements.

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSWA) requires employers to ensure the health and safety of all employees and anyone who may be affected by their work; this includes taking steps to control slip and trip risks. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 build on the requirements of the HSWA making it a duty for employers to assess risks, including slip and trip risks, and where necessary take action to safeguard health and safety.

## 2. Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to reduce the incidence of slips and trips in the University. Heads of Department have a responsibility to ensure that risk assessments have been carried out, including a slip and trip risk assessment and where necessary take action to safeguard health and safety and that workplaces under their control are free from risks as far as reasonably practicable.

Employees must take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work and must use any safety equipment provided in the interest of their health and safety. For example staff must take the responsibility to clear any spillages immediately and report any defects presenting a hazard to their line manager or Departmental Safety Advisor for appropriate action.

Further details of health and safety responsibilities are outlined in the document 'University of Bristol Health and Safety Organisation' available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/policy/organisation/>

## 3. Risk Assessment

Employers must assess the risks to employees and others who may be affected by their work activities e.g. members of the public and visitors. Guidance on carrying out a risk assessment with the emphasis on slip and trips is as follows;

5 steps to carrying out a slip and trip risk assessment,

- 1. Identify the hazards** in the workplace. Slips and trips may be caused by conditions such as uneven floors, trailing cables, inadequate lighting, processes or machinery that can lead to spillages or potential slippery areas such as workshops or kitchens. Ensure that any slip and trip hazards in outside areas that are under your control are identified in the assessment. Methods of identifying hazards may include inspection of areas, accident or incident records and asking employees and Safety Representatives.

2. **Decide who might be harmed and how.** Consider those who come in to the department and whether they are at risk including staff, students, contractors and members of the public. Give greater consideration to those who may be at greater risk including those with disabilities and any special requirements of younger or elderly persons.
3. **Consider the risks.** Are the precautions already in place adequate to deal with the risks? If not consider what additional/alternative control measure can be put in place. Further guidance is outlined in the table in Section 8 which will help to identify some of the risks that may be present and gives some practical measures that may be appropriate to control the risks. For example a risk assessment may lead to local rules being put into place to ensure that catering staff wear correct footwear in kitchens.
4. **Record the findings.** Record your risk assessment for any significant risks. Have a procedure in place that ensures that staff are aware of the findings of the risk assessment.
5. **Review the risk assessment.** Review the risk assessment regularly. If any significant changes take place, following an accident, incident or a raised concern, following a change of system, plant or material. Any review is to make sure existing precautions are adequate enough to deal with the risks.

Further information on risk assessment is available on the Health and Safety office website at; <https://www.bris.ac.uk/safety/policy/cop/riskassessmentcop.pdf>. A blank risk assessment form that can be used to record your risk assessment is available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/safe/forms/#ra> . The Health and Safety Executive website also contains very useful guidance and can be located via the link <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf> .

A risk assessment for slips and trips does not need to be a separate document; it may be appropriate to consider slip and trip hazards as part of other risk assessments or incorporated into standard operating procedure documents. Appendix 2 contains an example of a slip and trip risk assessment.

## 4. Inspection

It is recommended that inspections of workplaces are undertaken on a regular basis and are formally recorded. High risk areas such as laboratories or workshops may need to be inspected more frequently than other lower risk areas such as offices. Visual inspection should be ongoing with all members of staff being encouraged to report any defects immediately, and action taken to control them. 50% of all trip accidents are caused by poor housekeeping, personal responsibility and positive action by all staff is vital in reducing accidents.

A slips and trips checklist is available at Appendix 1 which can be used as an aide memoire during an inspection or used as a guide following an accident or incident that was attributed to a slip or trip.

## 5. Cleaning

Every workplace needs to be kept in a clean condition and waste must not be allowed to accumulate. Everyone in the workplace has a role in helping to reduce accidents by keeping their area clear and dealing with spillages immediately.

The process of cleaning can create slip and trip hazards, especially for those entering the area being cleaned, such as the cleaners; for example, smooth floors left damp by a mop are likely to be extremely slippery and trailing wires from a vacuum or buffing machine can present a trip hazard.

Effective training and supervision is essential to ensure cleaning is undertaken to the correct standard. Cleaners need to be informed of their duties and why the cleaning needs to be undertaken in a particular way or at a particular time. Lack of understanding can lead to inappropriate shortcuts.

People often slip on floors that have been left wet after cleaning. Staff who clean floors (even if it is just removing contamination) must stop pedestrian access to smooth wet floors by using barriers, locking doors, or cleaning in sections. Signs and cones only warn of a hazard, they do not prevent people from entering the area. If the spill is not visible they are usually ignored

The Health and Safety Executive guidance sheet 'Cleaning and its impact on slips and trips' is available at; <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/web/slips02.pdf>

## **6. Footwear**

Footwear can play an important part in preventing slips and trips. Departments should detail in their local rules document any footwear policy. Where floors are mainly clean and dry, a sensible footwear policy can help reduce risks. For slips and trips sensible means: - flat, with a sensible heel, with the sole and heel made in a softer material that provides some grip.

Where floors can not be kept dry or clean at all times e.g. food preparation areas, the right footwear will be especially important, so a slip resistant shoe may be required. As a minimum there must be a sensible shoe policy in place, however accidents or incidents may indicate that further control measures are required to reduce risks. If a department introduces a slip resistant shoe policy, the footwear will be considered to be personal protective equipment and will be subject to the requirements of the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations e.g. will have to be provided to employees free of charge (for more information on the regulations see the health and Safety Executive document available at; <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg174.pdf>).

The guidance note 'Preventing slips and trips in kitchens and food service' contains further guidance and is available at; <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/cais6.pdf>.

## **7. Accident / Incident Investigation**

All departments must have a procedure in place to ensure that any accidents and incidents are reported and investigated as necessary to establish any contributory causes. What appears to be a simple trip on the stairs may actually be caused by a loose nosing or uneven treads, or the lighting in the area may be inadequate? If any defects are spotted and remedied it could prevent a more serious accident from happening in the future. The checklist in Appendix 1 will be used to assist in identifying any hazards.

## **8. Training**

Training in risk assessment and accident investigation is available and can be booked via the Staff Development web site <http://staffdev.ilt.bris.ac.uk/staffdevelopment/courses/directory> . Staff should be made aware of department local rules such as the correct footwear to be worn (e.g., in catering areas) and the importance of defect reporting and when and how it is appropriate to do this. Local health and safety management arrangements in place may ensure that staff are made aware of local rules and arrangements initially at induction, and by regular communication thereafter in team meetings or via newsletters etc. It may also be necessary to communicate preventative measures following an accident or incident.

The Health and Safety Executive have launched STEP which is an eLearning package providing slips and trips guidance through interactive learning. It is an easy way to learn about slips and trips, how they are caused, why preventing them is important and how to tackle them. This is available at; [http://www.hse.gov.uk/slips/step/launch\\_sector.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/slips/step/launch_sector.htm)

## 9. Slips and Trips Risk Controls

Area	Practical measures for slips risk controls
External areas eg, steps and footpaths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable lighting – ensure spent bulbs are replaced promptly and lights are cleaned and repaired before lighting levels become too low to be safe.</li> <li>• Ensure floor surfaces i.e., paving slabs are secure and in good condition to give a flat, even surface.</li> <li>• Ensure the nosings of steps are anti-slip.</li> <li>• Provide handrails where appropriate and maintain them.</li> <li>• Clean mud, algae and leaves etc from surfaces.</li> <li>• Ensure a procedure is in place to deal with adverse weather conditions such as snow and ice.</li> </ul>
Building entrances/exits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display signs warning of a risk of slipping when appropriate</li> <li>• Ensure door stops are sited safely</li> <li>• Display signs warning of hidden steps and changes of level</li> <li>• Maintain mats in good condition</li> <li>• Stop water entering the building – improve external drainage, keep doors closed, use absorbent entrance mats to dry shoes</li> </ul>
Internal stairs and corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure adequate lighting levels. Replace, clean and repair lighting as soon as possible</li> <li>• Use anti-slip nosings on stairs and provide handrails where necessary.</li> <li>• Make sure there are no obstructions in the area</li> <li>• Ensure floor coverings are maintained and safe. Fix down mat edges, replace cracked tiles</li> </ul>
Teaching areas (including laboratories)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid trailing cables from equipment and tools</li> <li>• Ensure there are no articles obstructing walkways</li> <li>• Avoid overcrowding of rooms</li> <li>• Clear up spills immediately</li> </ul>
Workshops, technical areas and storage rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep areas around machines and equipment clear</li> <li>• Remove floor contamination e.g. oil and sawdust quickly and effectively</li> <li>• Keep containers of bulk liquids in bunded areas as spills cause slips</li> <li>• Use slip resistant flooring around machines</li> </ul>
Kitchens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide suitable equipment to avoid spillages (from cooking, washing up etc)</li> <li>• Ensure good ventilation</li> <li>• Ensure suitable footwear is worn. Further advice on footwear can be found at <a href="http://www.hse.gov.uk/slips/causes.htm#footwear">http://www.hse.gov.uk/slips/causes.htm#footwear</a></li> <li>• Spot clean spillages and pick up food contamination immediately</li> <li>• Thoroughly clean floors with appropriate products</li> <li>• Ensure good housekeeping around bins</li> <li>• Ensure floor surface is non-slip</li> <li>• Remove warning signs as soon as hazard has been removed</li> </ul>
Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide clear safe walkways within the office and corridors</li> <li>• Avoid trailing cables</li> <li>• Provide adequate storage</li> <li>• Do not store or leave materials around equipment i.e., photocopiers, printers, desks etc</li> <li>• Replace worn or damaged carpets/tiles</li> <li>• Ensure adequate lighting levels are maintained</li> </ul>
Indoor/outdoor sports areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure surfaces are flat and well maintained</li> <li>• Ensure users wear appropriate footwear</li> <li>• Keep smooth floors clean and completely free of wet or dust contamination</li> <li>• Remove accumulations of mud, leaves and algae etc</li> <li>• Ensure effective cleaning of sports hall floors</li> </ul>
Toilets, bath and shower rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop water getting on the floor – improve shower curtains/screens, position sufficient hand dryers close to sinks.</li> <li>• Remove water quickly – regular monitoring, spot clean, dry mop wet areas</li> <li>• Improve drainage and improve grip with slip resistant flooring</li> </ul>


## Slips and Trips Hazard Spotting Checklist

Potential issue	Tick if 'Yes'	Action Required	Date Completed
<b>Outdoor areas</b>			
1. Can anything be found on paths, steps and fire escapes that could cause slips e.g., leaves, wet grass, moss, mud, ice etc?			
2. Are there changes in level on the path that are not easy to see, e.g., small slopes? Are there holes, potholes or uneven paving on footpaths?			
<b>Entrances / Doorway</b>			
1. Is there water on the floor from rain etc making the floor slippery?			
2. Are there any trip hazards in the area e.g., trailing cables, deliveries, mats with curled up edges or other objects?			
<b>Corridors and offices</b>			
1. Are there any subtle changes in floor level e.g., slopes, small steps, abrupt changes from one flooring material to another?			
2. Are the floors smooth in areas where contamination can be found on the floor (e.g., liquids, food and food wrappers, dust, polythene, condensation etc?)			
3. Are the tiles or flooring becoming unstuck or curling at the edges? Are there holes?			
4. Are there any trip hazards around workstations or in corridors and walkways e.g., trailing cables, boxes, deliveries, equipment or other objects?			
5. Are light levels too low to see the floor surface clearly?			
<b>Stairs and ramps</b>			
1. Are step nosings hard to see, rounded, damaged or slippery?			
2. Are handrails available? Are they easy to reach and useable?			
3. Is the height (rise) of the steps or depth of tread (going) inconsistent throughout the flight?			
<b>Work areas eg workshops, kitchens etc</b>			
1. As part of the work process, is contamination (fluids, solids, dust, debris etc) getting onto the floor? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People – spillages, overfilling containers, discarding debris onto the floor</li> <li>• Machines – leaks, overspray, spills, by-product</li> <li>• Process – overspills, leaks</li> </ul>			
2. Is condensation forming on the floor? Is the floor slippery?			
3. Is poor drainage causing a pooling of fluids on the floor?			
4. Are designated walkways unusable or partially blocked?			
5. Are there any trip hazards around workstations, e.g., trailing cables, boxes, deliveries, other objects?			
6. Are light levels too low to see clearly? Is light bouncing off the flooring creating glare?			
<b>Toilets, bath and shower rooms</b>			
1. Is water getting onto the floor? Is the floor slippery when wet?			
2. Are taps or pipes leaking?			
<b>Cleaning</b>			
1. Do spillages stay on the floor for a time before they are cleaned up?			
2. Are small spills wet mopped?			

3. Can people walk through areas during wet mopping or when floors are still wet? Is the floor smooth or slippery when wet?			
4. Are warning signs left out long after the spill has gone and the floor has dried?			
5. Are people slipping on the floor even though it has been cleaned and is dry?			
6. Can cleaning equipment leads be seen blocking or crossing walkways, creating a trip hazard?			
7. Do bin bags/cleaning equipment in walkways create trip hazards?			
<b>Tasks</b>			
1. Do tasks stop people seeing slip or trip hazards e.g., carrying items that restrict view, upset peoples balance, rushing?			
<b>Checklist completed by:</b>			<b>Date:</b>

Example of a Slip and Trip Risk Assessment

Appendix 2

		<b>University Of Bristol</b> <b>Risk Assessment : Slips and trips</b>				
		<b>Department:</b> <b>Risk Assessment Completed by:</b>				<b>Date:</b>
Description and location of Hazard	Who might be harmed	Existing Control Measures	A. Likely severity of injury (1 to 3)	B. Likely Occurrence (1 to 3)	Risk Rating (A) x (B)	Comments/Actions
Offices and corridors Slips and trips	Staff and others i.e., visitors, members of the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate lighting in all areas</li> <li>Staff advised to clear any spillages immediately</li> <li>No trailing wires or cables</li> <li>Staff advised to keep work areas clear e.g. no boxes in the walkways</li> <li>Office areas cleaned on a daily basis</li> </ul>	1	2	2	
Doors and entrances slips and trips	Staff and others i.e., visitors, members of the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non slip matting provided</li> <li>Warning signs displayed if conditions are wet</li> <li>Adequate lighting</li> </ul>	1	2	2	
External Areas e.g., steps and walkways Slips and trips	Staff and others i.e., visitors, members of the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Areas gritted to provide safe walkways in icy/snowy conditions</li> <li>Regularly inspected for defects by the DSA</li> <li>Regularly cleared of debris</li> <li>Handrails provided and maintained where appropriate</li> </ul>	2	2	4	

<b>Score</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Column A: Severity of Injury:</b>	Major Injury or death	Injury requiring medical treatment	Minor or no injury
<b>Column B: Likely Occurrence:</b>	Regular exposure of several employees to hazard.	Occasional exposure of few employees.	Exposure to hazard very rare.

Risk Score	Response Times	Risk Score	Response Times
9	Immediate cessation of activity until interim controls are agreed and implemented	3	Review on change of process or if circumstances change. Provide additional training, supervision and monitoring.
6	Critically examine the areas of exposure in the process and agree timetable for completion of all agreed actions	<3	12 months review (date of next audit). No real changes in procedure required to reduce risk further