



*Relentlessly Loyal*

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## SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

Incidents involving slips and trips in retail establishments are one of the highest causes of claims. There can be a variety of causes for slipping and tripping outside or inside premises. To reduce your risk of falls at your facility, review below some of the common areas that we find where these falls may occur and prevention methods to reduce and/or eliminate the exposure.

### Parking Lots/Sidewalks

- Depending on your situation, some businesses own part of a parking lot and sidewalk. If you do not own and lease part of the premises, you will want to review the lease for any responsibilities you may have to clean and maintain it. You may be responsible for communicating any deficiency and if so, you will want to have it well documented.
- If you own a parking lot and/or sidewalk consider the following:
  - Inspect and repair the premises for any pot holes, depressions, or uneven pavement that may cause a tripping hazard.
  - Areas that receive snow and Ice
    - Have a program to clean premises of snow and Ice.
    - If handled by a third party vendor, have a written agreement in place and obtain a certificate of insurance. Understand the parameters of their responsibility and you may have to remove snow and apply ice melt in addition.
    - Apply ice melt in areas where responsible.
      - Document when and where ice melt is applied if cameras are not available to capture.
    - Pay attention to areas such as rain gutters where water dripping from them may freeze at night. Inspect the areas if they flow out onto sidewalks before opening and apply ice melt if necessary.
  - Provide adequate lighting at the entrance to the building.

### Entrances (Inside Building)

- Use floor mats, especially for rain and snow conditions to help remove water from foot wear.
- Use longer floor mats at entrances. A good rule is for 15 feet of matting to remove the majority of debris from foot traffic. This will allow most people to make contact with each foot 3 times with the floor mat.

### Spills

- Inspect premises regularly, at least every hour completely for any spills or tripping hazards.
- Employees should be aware to look for spills and tripping hazards when walking around the premises.
- Clean spills up immediately that may be from water or liquid products that may be used in the business environment.

## Wet Floor Signs

- In areas where they could be wet such as entrances during wet conditions and when cleaning floors.
- Do not leave wet floor signs out on when floors are dry.
- Ensure signage is visible from all directions or at least in directions people will see them when entering the area.
- Place signs on both sides of the wet floor area.
- For blind areas place a sign on the other side of the turn to warn of the hazard.
- Depending on the demographic, consider signage that is both in English and Spanish.

## Cleaning floors

- Use commercial floor cleaners designed to reduce slipping.
- After mopping consider using a dry mop or fan to dry the area quicker.
- If you have a floor that is slippery when wet:
  - Consider contacting a vendor to apply a product to make it less slippery by etching the flooring.
  - Replace the flooring with a non-slip flooring recommended for the area in need.
  - Use a proper floor mat that will not slip on the flooring and prevent patrons and employees from slipping.
  - Evaluate the floor cleaning products you are using.

## Floor mats

- Use a good quality floor mat that will lay flat to reduce them from being a tripping hazard.
- Floor mats should have a beveled edge to reduce tripping.
- Replace mats that show wear, such as buckling, have corners curled up, or damaged in a way that may cause a tripping hazard.
- Pick a floor mat that will not move on the floor when stepped on.
- Use a floor mat designed for the area. If the area is wet or slippery from other product make sure the floor mat is designed to stay in place if stepped on. Check with your vendor for the best floor mat for the intended area. Although a floor mat is designed to be slip-resistant you want to check before customers use.
- Make sure the floor is dry underneath the floor mat.
- Make sure floor mats do not overlap each other if laying more than one together. This can become a tripping hazard
- Inspect mats daily for condition and to make sure they are lying flat.
- Keep mats clean.

## Elevation Changes

- Parking stops
  - Paint a contrasting color such as with a non-slip construction yellow to make more visible.
- Sidewalks
  - If sidewalks are higher than the parking area, paint the top and front edge with a contrasting color such as with a non-slip construction yellow to make the change in elevation more prominent and easier to see.
  - If the pavement parking area pavement is of different construction such as asphalt and sidewalk concrete there may be ample color difference where painting would not be necessary.
- Uneven walking areas:
  - The Americans with Disabilities Act defines a tripping hazard as any crack or joint over ¼”.
  - Pavement may move or shift due to freezing and thawing, settling, fractures, or tree roots.
  - The two common methods to repair is by:
    - Grinding – If the edge is not over 2” concrete or asphalt can be ground to a bevel making it less of a tripping hazard.
    - Replacement – If grinding is not an option, a section will need to be replaced.

## Other Slipping and Tripping Considerations

- Keep walkways clear of clutter.
- Electrical cords can become tripping hazards from equipment. Install permanent wiring to avoid using extension cords that can increase tripping and fire hazards.
- Towels used in some establishments may get left on the floor or fall from shelves patrons or employees may slip on.
- If there are items used in the space that customers use inspect the area after use to ensure it is free of slipping or tripping hazards.
- Employees can wear slip resistant foot wear for added protection.