

Slips, Trips and Falls



Overview

Slips, trips and falls are one of the most common causes of injuries in schools resulting in a variety of injuries including fractures, cuts and bruises, and musculoskeletal injuries. This guideline has been developed to assist schools to reduce the risk of injury from slips, trips and falls for all staff, students and others on the school site.

Common causes of slips, trips and falls in schools

FLOORING	Unsuitable, slippery, dirty, not correctly fitted, not maintained, changes of level that are not highlighted, incline of a ramp, change from wet to dry surface, worn coverings or broken tiles, potholes and cracks in floors.
STAIRS	Low visibility, no suitable handrail, steps of uneven height, steps of varying width, poorly maintained coverings or surfaces.
HOUSEKEEPING	No suitable walkway through work areas, trailing cords, obstructions, untidy floors around work stations and inadequate storage space, liquid spills, loads that obstruct vision.
HUMAN FACTORS	Wearing inappropriate footwear, students and staff rushing about or carrying large objects.
ENVIRONMENT	Light on a shiny floor causing glare, too little light, rainwater or condensation getting onto flooring, spills.
CLEANING	Damp floors after cleaning, trailing cords from a vacuum cleaner.

Adapted from: OHS in Schools (WorkSafe Victoria)

Strategies to reduce the risk of injuries from slips, trips and falls

- Identify tasks and areas which place people at risk of slips, trips and falls.
- Provide information, instruction and training as appropriate to staff and students in relation to slips, trips and falls.
- Training staff to recognise slip and trip hazards and the importance of good housekeeping.
- Ensuring that school bags, musical instruments, electrical lead and sports equipment are not left on the floor where people can trip over them.
- Providing sufficient power sockets to minimise or remove the requirement for cords on the floor (where possible).
- Providing sufficient storage systems to keep materials out of walkways and corridors.



- Ensuring regular cleaning, housekeeping and prompt clean-up of spills.
- Providing sufficient rubbish or recycling bins.
- Reviewing external walkways and pathways for slip, trip and fall hazards.
- Ensuring mats are fixed and do not have curling edges.
- Promoting the use of appropriate, slip-resistant footwear (where applicable).
- Having arrangements in place for wet weather including signage, wet weather mats, frequent mopping of water trailed in.
- Providing facilities for leaving umbrellas at entrances.
- Improving visibility where there are slopes and changes of level with hand rails, floor markings, etc.
- Choosing suitable floor surfaces and avoiding smooth floors in areas that will become wet or contaminated such as kitchens and hallways.
- Planning pedestrian and traffic routes where possible to avoid overcrowding.
- Ensuring lighting levels are adequate.
- Ensuring cables are not placed where people can trip over them.
- Reducing the risk of creating additional slip or trip hazards during cleaning, maintenance and building works.
- Regularly checking floors and other surfaces for loose finishes, holes, cracks, work rugs and mats, etc.
- Keeping work areas tidy.

Resources

- Slips, Trips and Falls Checklist
- Prevention of Falls – Accessing Shelves (WorkSafe)

Related Topics

- First Aid
- Footwear
- Incident Reporting
- Playground Safety

Legislation

- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Section 21)*