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Measures to augment safety from Slip, Trip and Fall at workplace

Overview

Slips, trips, and falls are a serious public health concern as they can result in a variety of injuries, including fractures, sprains, strains, cuts, abrasions, and even death. This is a major concern at the workplace as well. According to the '2006 Liberty Mutual Workplace Safety Index', the annual direct cost of disabling occupational injuries due to slips, trips, and falls is estimated to exceed \$11 billion. The index reports that falls on same level are the second most costly occupational injury (an estimated annual cost of \$6.7 billion), just behind overexertion. The index also shows that bodily reaction, which comprises injuries from slipping or tripping without falling, is the third highest injury category, followed by falls to lower level (\$4.6 billion).

We at Liberty Videocon General Insurance value the criticality of ensuring safety from slips, trips and falls at your workplace, as injuries therefrom may result in **employee absence, loss of productivity, high workers compensation claims, and reduced employee morale**. We sincerely hope that the measures suggested in this document will help in augmenting safe, secure ways of preventing such accidents at your business establishment.



Source: <http://www.tractionguard.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/business-advantage1.jpg>

What are Slips, Trips and Falls?

Slips occur when a person's foot loses traction with the floor. The most common causes are slippery floor surfaces (e.g. highly polished, wet or greasy) and inappropriate footwear.

Tripping occurs when a person unexpectedly catches his foot on objects which are usually small and unobtrusive, such as cracks in the floor or electrical leads.

Falls can result from a slip or trip, but mostly occur from low heights, such as steps, stairs and curbs.

Measures to ensure safety from Slips, Trips and Falls at workplace

Good Housekeeping Practices

Many same level falls are the result of slipperiness caused by faulty housekeeping or defects of the floor surface. When dirt or grease fills the floor surface pores or valleys, surface roughness is compromised.

- Cleaning protocols need to consider floor types, contaminants, and the type of cleaning solvent.
- Employees should adhere to floor cleaning schedules and protocols.
- In addition, floors should be periodically inspected for slipperiness and evaluated for effectiveness of floor cleaning protocol.



Reduce Wet or Slippery Surfaces

- Use moisture-absorbent mats with beveled edges in entrance areas. Make sure they have backing material that will not slide on the floor.
- Display 'Wet Floor' signs as needed.
- Anti-skid adhesive tape should be used in troublesome areas.
- Spills should be cleared immediately.
- Use proper area rugs or mats for food preparation areas.



The use of mats is a valid intervention for reducing injuries. There are two types of matting systems like (i) entrance mat

systems and (ii) multi-purpose mats. Entrance mats help to keep floor surfaces clean and dry. Multipurpose mats absorb liquids, elevate workers above standing water, provide a slip resistant working or standing surface, and/or provide anti-fatigue properties.

Avoid Creating Obstacles in Aisles and Walkways

Injuries can also result from trips caused by obstacles, clutter, materials and equipment in aisles, corridors, entrance ways and stairwells.

- Keep all work areas, passageways, storerooms and service areas clean and orderly.
- Avoid stringing cords, cables or air hoses across hallways or in any designated aisle.
- Avoid leaving boxes, files or briefcases in the aisles of office areas.
- Encourage safe work practices such as closing file cabinet drawers after use and picking up loose items from the floor.
- Conduct periodic inspections for slip and trip hazards.



Create and Maintain Proper Lighting

Poor lighting in the workplace increases chance of accidents.

- Use proper illumination in walkways, staircases, ramps, hallways, basements, construction areas and dock areas.
- Keep work areas well lit and clean.
- Always turn on the light first upon entering a darkened room.
- Keep poorly lit walkways clear of clutter and obstructions.



- Keep areas around light switches clear and accessible.
- Repair fixtures, switches and cords immediately if they malfunction.

Wear Appropriate Shoes

The shoes we wear can play a big part in preventing falls. The slickness of the soles and the type of heels worn need to be evaluated to avoid slips, trips and falls. Shoelaces need to be tied correctly. Whenever a fall-related injury is investigated, the footwear needs to be evaluated to see if it contributed to the incident. Employees should be encouraged to wear footwear appropriate for the duties of their work task.



Control Individual Behaviour

This condition is the toughest to control. Being in a hurry will result in walking too fast or running which increases the chances of a slip, trip or fall. Taking shortcuts, not watching where one is going, using a cell phone, carrying materials which obstructs the vision, wearing sunglasses in low-light areas, not using designated walkways and speed are common elements in many on-the-job injuries.



Companies should educate all employees on the seriousness of slip and fall accidents and inform them of any hazards specific to their organisation/industry. When employees know the causes of slips and falls and understand the technical components including types of flooring and types of treatments, they too can help to recognise, evaluate, and control hazards.

Trivia

- Footwear accounts for 24% of all slip and fall accidents, according to the National Floor Safety Institute (NFSI).
- The majority (66%) of falls happen on the same level resulting from slips and trips. The remaining 34% are falls from a height.
- In 2013 unintentional falls resulted in 5,56,000 deaths worldwide, up from 3,41,000 deaths in 1990.



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