



Slip, trip and fall prevention techniques

Background

Over a three-year period analyzed by Utica National, it was found that slips, trips and falls are the number one cause of accidents among our Child Care Center customers. Slips, trips and falls result from the unintended or unexpected change in the contact between the feet or footwear and the walking or working surface. Walking and working surfaces such as floors, stairs, ramps, walkways and roadways are associated with “same-level” slip, trip and fall injuries.

The *Slip, Trip and Fall Prevention Risk Management Alert* has been developed to provide supervisors and workers with the tools necessary to recognize, assess and control workplace hazards that may result in a slip, trip or fall. All slip, trip and fall hazards should be reported immediately to the supervisor and, if requiring corrective action by the maintenance department, should also be reported immediately to them.

Common Causes of Slips, Trips and Falls

Some of the more common accidents included instructors tripping over small children and miscellaneous items on floors, i.e., floor mats and car seats. Slips on wet floors were also noted. In addition, trying to restrain a running child resulted in employee falls.

Sources and Countermeasures

On same level – Inside

- Report and clean spills immediately.
- Effectively capture and remove soil from the surface.
- Use portable signs to signal temporary conditions such as “Caution – Wet Floor.”
- Use surfaces that have good “friction” (.5 co-efficient of friction or above) when selecting floor surface materials.
- Avoid high-speed polishing as this creates smooth and slippery surfaces.
- Do not use oil-treated mops as this can make surfaces slippery.
- Repair rug and floor defects immediately to avoid accidents.
- Maintain floors free of tripping hazards, i.e., toys, small boxes.

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On same level – Outside

- Maintain level walking surfaces. Normally, a defect will be ½ inch or greater in differential based on court rulings.
- Depressions should be no deeper than ½ inch to ¾ inch.
- Keep surfaces free of obstacles.
- Maintain good lighting for evening events.
- Use caution on wet surfaces, and use stair handrails when possible.

Stairs – Inside

- Use caution signs in areas where there is a “step-down.”
- Use color to differentiate changes in elevation, i.e., a carpeted step-down.
- Keep things off the stairs and practice good overall housekeeping.
- Maintain the stairs in good condition.
- Wooden stairs often need non-slip treads and handrails.
- Use caution when carrying objects up and down the stairs. Get assistance if the object is awkward and/or heavy.

Stairs – Outside

- Keep stairs and ramps well maintained.
- Maintain stairs free of snow and ice.
- Handrails are needed for stairs with four or more risers, per OSHA requirements.

Ice and snow

- Hire a reputable snow removal contractor and obtain certificates of insurance from the contractor. The contract should specify institution surfaces should be treated within a specified short period of time after the snow and/or ice falls. The shorter time period, the better.
- Advise workers to wear footwear not conducive to slips and falls, i.e., no leather soles.

Ladders

- Provide adequate training and never let an inexperienced employee climb a ladder.
- Extension ladders must be tied-off. Stay off the upper four rungs.
- Only use ladders in good condition. Destroy damaged ladders as soon as possible. Ladders removed from service should be marked “Do Not Use.”
- Use ladders only in accordance with directions and heed warning labels.
- Never stand on the upper two steps of a stepladder.

Utica National has a wide array of materials available to help you manage the risks associated with your Child Care Center. Visit us online at www.uticanational.com or contact your local Risk Management Representative for more information.

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