

How to Prevent Slip, Trip and Fall Accidents

First of all, it's important to understand that the vast majority of slips and falls occur because the person is not paying attention to where they are walking or what they're doing and they either trip on something or the floor surface is slippery. We can describe slips and falls as a dual cause accident. We say dual because there may be two causes. First, the person wasn't paying attention.

The second cause could be a slippery floor, an electrical cord that shouldn't have been there or a number of other potential hazards. To reduce about 90 percent of slips and falls, just pay attention to what you're doing and be aware of your walking or sitting surfaces or positions and you'll eliminate slips and falls.

Causes of Slip, Trip and Fall Accidents

Let's look at the other 10 percent and we'll call these physical hazards that can cause slips and falls.

The first step is to have a good maintenance program to keep the outside walking surfaces in good condition. A consistent sweeping program with either a push sweeper or mechanical sweeper can reduce the level of dirt, grit or sand in the parking lot and around entrances.

Cleaning is a fundamental safety measure to help reduce slippery walking surfaces, but it's also very important to reduce the amount of dirt, sand, ice and snow from being carried inside the building. On the inside of the building, the first 15 to 25 feet from the entrance are the most important. This is where any dirt or other debris is carried into the building from the bottom of your shoes. Walk off mats are recommended at the entrances to help clean your shoes as you walk inside. These mats wipe off dirt and moisture, which reduces the slippery shoe surfaces from the outside dirt. These mats should be about 15 to 25 feet long and should be wide enough to accommodate everyone walking through. Next, frequent cleaning of the walk off mat is critical.

Naturally, all walking surfaces must be kept clean. Think about the equipment that rolls over the same floor on which you walk. Forklifts, hand truck and other equipment can have grease, oil, solvent and other debris on their tires and can make walking surfaces very slippery.

