Employee Slip, Trip and Fall Prevention Guide – General Industry

Provided by: Barton Insurance Group LLC

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Introduction

Slips, trips and falls are some of the most common employee injuries that employers deal with. While injuries from slips, trips or falls are often minor, they can sometimes be serious or—in some cases—fatal. That's why it's important for employers to make every effort to prevent these injuries whenever possible.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, manufacturing, trade, transportation, utilities, leisure and hospitality industries had a total of 112,040 nonfatal slip, trip and fall injuries in 2020. It's also worth noting that according to the National Safety Council, slips, trips and falls are number three in the top three 2020 occupational injuries involving days away from work. Transportation and warehousing are the top two industries most at risk for slip, trip and fall injuries.

How to Use This Guide

General industry employers can use this guide as a risk management tool for determining what types of slip, trip and fall hazards could cause employee injuries within their respective workplaces. In addition, such employers can reference this guide when implementing strategies to reduce those hazards. While it's important to keep in mind that some industries may also encounter risks related to members of the public experiencing slip, trip and fall injuries on-site, this guide only specifically addresses key hazards and mitigation strategies to consider to protect employees from these injuries; however, when implemented will likely help prevent third-party slip, trip and falls injuries from occurring.

Reducing slip, trip and fall hazards on-site is essential to keeping employees safe and injury-free. In addition, implementing risk management strategies to prevent injuries can limit OSHA-recordable incidents and reduce workers' compensation claims, therefore minimizing related expenses and promoting an overall safe working culture.

This guide will review the most common slip, trip and fall hazards that employees may face in work environments. This guide will also explain the framework for how to effectively identify and address slip, trip and fall hazards within such facilities. Lastly, the end of this guide features a comprehensive checklist to help employers take note of and properly manage problematic areas that could pose slip, trip and fall hazards on-site, as well as an incident investigation report to allow employers to determine the main causes of workplace accidents.

While slips, trips and falls can lead to serious employee injuries, these injuries (as well as their associated consequences) are largely preventable. By utilizing the information and resources provided in this guide, general industry employers can effectively safeguard their employees and limit potential slip, trip and fall incidents.

How Do Slips, Trips and Falls Happen?

Slips, trips and falls can cause various injuries—including sprains, strains, bruises, contusions, fractures, abrasions, lacerations or even death. These injuries can be detrimental to employees' safety, health and overall quality of life. What's more, employees could be temporarily or permanently disabled from slip, trip or fall injuries, significantly affecting their work capabilities and everyday routines.

In addition to impacting employees, employers may also experience elevated costs and productivity losses if their workers need to take time away from their jobs to recover from slip, trip and fall injuries. As it pertains to general industry facilities, these injuries could leave employers no choice but to hire additional employees to fill open positions, therefore exacerbating training costs, increasing onboarding demands and forcing current employees to pick up extra shifts until positions are filled. With this in mind, it's evident that preventing slip, trip and fall injuries among employees is crucial.

The first step in preventing these injuries is understanding how they happen. Here's a breakdown of common hazards and workplace conditions that may contribute to slips, trips and falls.

Slips

Slips occur when there's not enough friction or traction between an individual's foot (or shoe) and the walking surface beneath them, thus resulting in a loss of balance.

Reduced friction normally stems from slippery surfaces, which could be caused by spills, cleaning products, water, blood, dust or food. While wearing the proper shoes for the job can help protect employees from slipping on these surfaces, they will not eliminate slipping hazards altogether. As such, it's important for employers to regularly assess these hazards and do what they can to ensure safe walking surfaces.

Common conditions that can lead to slips include, but are not limited to:

- Wet floors from outside elements being brought indoors (e.g., rain, mud, snow and ice)
- Spilled substances on concrete, laminate or tile floors
- Dirty floors or surfaces coated with certain types of floor cleaners

Trips

Trips tend to occur when an individual's lower body (e.g., their leg or foot) hits an object and their upper body continues moving, causing them to lose stability. Another way a person can trip is when they descend the stairs and miss a step or lose their balance. Trips often happen when a person is in a hurry and not paying attention to their surroundings.

Key conditions that may result in trips include, but are not limited to:

- Cluttered walkways or rooms
- Improper workplace lighting
- Uneven flooring (e.g., loose carpet or jagged floorboards)
- Unmarked steps or inclines in walkways

Falls

Falls are the leading cause of unintentional injuries and account for millions of visits to emergency rooms. There are two different types of falls that employers should be aware of:

- Same-level falls
- Elevated falls

Same-level falls are the most common type of fall. These injuries entail an individual falling onto the walking surface directly beneath their feet. Between the two types of falls, same-level falls typically result in less severe injuries. These types of falls normally occur when an employee is walking on-site and comes into contact with an object on the floor that causes them to lose balance. For example, an employee walking down an aisleway may collide with a piece of equipment in their path and lose their stability, resulting in a fall.

Elevated falls are those that occur from a heightened location, such as a ladder or flight of stairs. Elevated falls are less common but generally lead to more severe injuries than their same-level counterparts. These falls are a greater risk among employees who frequently work from heights, such as maintenance workers. Such injuries could also occur if employees use step ladders to retrieve supplies in closets or on shelves.

Key Slip, Trip and Fall Hazards for General Industry Employees

It's important to identify key slip, trip and fall hazards that may arise in general industry facilities. By understanding these hazards, employers will be able to effectively address them within their own workplaces and better protect employees.

While each industry can be different, here are key slip, trip and fall hazards to be aware of:

- Unmarked or slippery substances on floors
- Inconsistent or uneven walking surfaces
- Outdoor elements that get carried indoors
- Cluttered, dusty or otherwise dirty walking surfaces
- Insufficient ladder usage (including step ladders)

Additionally, OSHA has regulations on maintaining walking and working surfaces under 29 CFR 1910 Subpart D that employers must follow to prevent slip, trip and fall hazards. The next few sections provide more details on these hazards and outline steps employers must take to mitigate them, thus protecting their employees and ensuring OSHA compliance.

Substances on Floors

Substances can end up on the floors in facilities for a number of reasons. For instance, an employee may spill their food during their lunch break, a leaky pipe could drip water onto the floors or a visitor may inadvertently carry snow or rain from their shoes indoors and create puddles. In any case, employers should be aware of any substances on their facilities' floors at all times, as these substances can be the culprits behind employees' slip, trip and fall injuries. Common substances that employers may encounter on their floors include:

- Water
- Grease
- Oil
- Fluid
- Food
- Blood
- Mud
- Dust
- Plastic wrap
- Powder
- Wood

Under OSHA regulations, all walking and working surfaces must be kept in a clean, orderly and sanitary condition. As such, employers should make it a priority to address substances on floors and do what they can to minimize these hazards. By identifying substances' original sources, employers can determine effective response measures. For example, discovering that a leaky pipe caused water to drip on the floor can show an employer that they need to fix the pipe to stop the dripping and prevent related hazards.

Additionally, employers can take proactive steps to limit slip, trip and fall hazards caused by substances on floors. These steps include establishing routine cleaning protocols for all walking and working surfaces and keeping up with regular maintenance on such surfaces. Furthermore, employees should be required to utilize nonslip footwear to protect against possible injuries caused by coming in contact with substances on floors.

Handling Wet Floors

Wet floors are a significant employee safety concern in any workplace. As a result, employers should make sure they educate their employees about what actions to take when they notice wet floors. Per OSHA regulations, employers are responsible for keeping walking and working surfaces in good condition, which includes maintaining dry floors as much as possible. If employers leverage processes or procedures on-site that may increase the likelihood of wet floors, they must ensure proper drainage systems and—to the extent feasible—provide plenty of dry standing areas (e.g., false floors, platforms and waterproof mats).

The simplest way for employers to prevent slip, trip and fall injuries from wet floors is to have signage in place warning others when floors are or might be wet. This signage can be especially helpful when spills occur or the floors have recently been cleaned. In addition, if employees are working in a freezer unit, it is important that they pay attention to patches of ice that could be on the floor from water buildup.

Addressing Spills

When spills happen, they should be addressed immediately. If a waiting period is necessary to obtain adequate supplies to clean up a spill, signage should be in place that directs foot traffic away from the spill. This step should be taken as soon as the spill is detected. Once such signage is in place, the spill should be covered, cleaned up and reported right away to prevent any injuries from occurring. If the area where the spill took place resulted in a significant amount of water on the floor, the entire area should be shut down and fully cleaned up before anyone can pass through.

If spills or wet spots are common in a specific area, cleaning supplies should be stored nearby so they are easily accessible. Additionally, it's important to avoid leaving warning signage out all the time, as people can become accustomed to seeing it, thus making it easier to ignore. In frequently slippery areas, employers can utilize spill pads for quick and easy cleanup.

If areas are known for having wet floors (e.g., entrances from outside), then rugs or mats can be used to help absorb excess liquid. When using mats or rugs, employers should make sure they are of an appropriate size for the area at hand and large enough for individuals to wipe off their shoes easily. If mats or rugs are used at entrances and water starts puddling alongside them, they likely aren't large enough for the space.

Cleaning Floors

Employers should also establish workplace policies around cleaning floors to their employees. Notably, employees should be trained on any unique and site-specific facility requirements. Further, it's important for employers to clarify employees' expectations as it relates to cleaning and maintaining the floors on-site. In particular, employers should be able to answer the following questions for their workers:

- Does the workplace have a full-time cleaning team?
- Are employees required to clean floors?
- What specific cleaning protocols should employees follow?

Regardless of whether employers have designated janitorial workers or require all employees to participate in cleaning the floors, it's crucial to provide clear communication on floor maintenance procedures. Specifically, employees in charge of cleaning should be well-informed on the types of products and chemicals they must use. Employers should select cleaning products that leave behind little residue after they're applied (e.g., different types of floor wax). After all, some products are known to create slippery surfaces and subsequent hazards.

Beyond selecting the right cleaning products, employers should be aware that there are different methods for cleaning floors. In terms of preventing injuries, a two-step cleaning method is the most effective. This two-step method is as follows:

- Apply the cleaning solution to the area in need with a saturated mop.
- Wait a few minutes, then clean up the solution with a wrung mop before the solution dries.

This method ensures that floor contaminants are effectively removed, providing clean and hazard-free surfaces.

Providing PPE

In addition to the aforementioned measures, employers can help prevent employee injuries due to substances on their floors by having employees wear personal protective equipment (PPE) on the job. In the case of slip, trip and fall prevention, nonslip footwear can be considered proper PPE.

Employers should recommend that their employees wear nonslip shoes at all times in the workplace. Such footwear not only protects employees from slipping and potentially falling.

Employees of all positions within the company can benefit from wearing nonslip shoes. However, employees who continually work in wet or slippery areas should be required to wear such shoes. In order to promote this requirement, employers should consider covering the cost of a pair of nonslip shoes on behalf of their employees. This can be done by providing an allowance to each employee who wears nonslip shoes.

When it comes to compliance concerns, employers should determine their obligations related to purchasing and providing nonslip footwear for employees under OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.132(h)(2). Under this regulation, employers are not required to pay for employees' nonspecialty safety footwear, provided that they permit such shoes to be worn off-site.

Overall, nonslip footwear is an essential form of PPE for employees in general industry environments, helping safeguard them from potential injuries. Nevertheless, this footwear does not eliminate slip, trip and fall hazards and should be always be implemented in conjunction with other risk management methods.

Indoor Surface Hazards

In the scope of this guide, indoor surface hazards refer to any type of indoor surface irregularities that could cause slips, trips and falls. Such irregularities may include buckled carpeting, dented tiles and holes in concrete flooring. Indoor surface hazards can be particularly common in the following areas:

- High-traffic areas
- Hallways or walkways
- Areas near floor drains
- Sloped areas
- Entrances and exits
- Areas with floor mats or rugs
- Surface transition areas

Addressing Indoor Surface Hazards

Eliminating slip, trip and fall risks related to indoor surface hazards is often more difficult and complex than handling substances on floors. General industry employers should be aware that some of the ways to address these hazards—namely, making necessary surface repairs—can be costly and time-consuming. However, employers should be sure to budget for such repairs, as they are well worth it to prevent potential injuries. When making these repairs, employers should work with qualified and competent professionals—whether these professionals come from an internal maintenance department or third-party service provider (e.g., a contractor).

Even though indoor surface hazards can take time to repair, they should be identified early on so they can be addressed accordingly. For example, if there is a crack in the flooring that creates an uneven surface, the area should be highlighted with brightly colored warning tape or, better still, blocked off entirely. These actions can help bring awareness to dangerous areas and allow individuals to avoid indoor surface hazards while they are being repaired, therefore minimizing associated injuries.

Beyond avoiding indoor surface hazards that require repairs, employers should instruct their employees to always keep an eye out for these hazards. For instance, if an employee sees a rug that needs to be straightened, it should be taken care of right away to help prevent related slips, trips and falls.

Indoor surface hazards should also be addressed within employee safety training programs. Specifically, employers should remind employees to consistently watch where they are walking on-site. After all, employees who don't pay attention to their surroundings are more likely to experience slip, trip and fall injuries on the job. Staying attentive is especially important while employees are walking across surface transition areas (e.g., an area where the flooring switches from carpet to tile) and sloped areas.

Outdoor Surface Hazards

Outdoor surface hazards also tend to create significant slip, trip and fall risks for employers. Generally speaking, if facility grounds are poorly maintained, hazards are likely present. Specific outdoor surface hazards for employers to look for include potholes in parking lots, uneven curbs or sidewalks, debris-covered walkways and weather-related issues (e.g., wet or icy surfaces from rain or snow). These hazards can greatly increase the likelihood of employees getting injured while entering and exiting the workplace. Furthermore, OSHA regulations on maintaining safe walking and working surfaces extend to outdoor areas. As such, mitigating outdoor surface hazards is vital for employers to protect their employees and ensure OSHA compliance.

Addressing Outdoor Surface Hazards

There are several steps employers can take to limit outdoor surface hazards. For instance, improving lighting in outside areas may help reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls among employees. This is particularly true for those who enter and exit the workplace at night or in the early morning. Especially since some facilities have employees who work night shifts, providing them with ample lighting as they walk to and from facility entrances and exits—whether it's through a parking lot or designated sidewalk—can help them spot and avoid potentially unsafe conditions.

Apart from proper lighting, employers should also keep outdoor surfaces on a regular maintenance schedule—similar to that of indoor surfaces. This can help reduce the risk of hazards going undetected. If issues such as potholes, cracks or excess debris are identified, they should be addressed immediately. Employers should consider consulting qualified and experienced professionals for outdoor maintenance procedures.

Employers should also develop plans for handling weather-related concerns. In particular, during winter months, employers should have outdoor walking surfaces shoveled and plowed to remove any snow. Doing so can also help prevent ice buildup stemming from compacted snow. Additionally, employers should utilize effective de-icing measures to melt ice on outdoor surfaces and minimize slippery conditions. Sodium chloride can be especially useful in melting ice outdoors. During other seasons (e.g., summer and autumn), measures such as leaf and tree branch removal may also be necessary to reduce outdoor surface hazards.

Cluttered Areas

Considering the wide range of activities and operations that occur at general industry businesses, it's certainly possible that employers may find themselves left with a number of cluttered messes to address on-site. Nevertheless, cluttered areas can easily contribute to slip, trip and fall injuries among employees. For example, an employee could run into piled-up garbage or stray supplies in their workspace and trip over the mess. To minimize clutter concerns and associated hazards, it's crucial for employers to prioritize adequate housekeeping measures.

Educating Employees on Proper Housekeeping Protocols

Routine housekeeping is essential to providing a clean and hazard-free facility. If employers don't have employees clean up after themselves following their work procedures or job tasks, they could be contributing to an unsafe and unsanitary workplace.

Employers should make sure there are sufficient housekeeping procedures in place and openly communicate with employees about these procedures. To assist with proper housekeeping practices, employees should also be made aware of the following:

- Who to contact for housekeeping assistance
- Who is responsible for specific housekeeping procedures (e.g., spill cleanup, garbage removal, storage organization and general cleaning duties)
- Which cleaning products to use and where these products are stored
- What the appropriate cleaning methods are for each area or common situations on-site
- What types of hazards are associated with the use of different cleaning products on-site
- What PPE to wear when using cleaning products (if necessary)
- When signage or notification of cleaning taking place is needed and where to find this signage
- How to properly document housekeeping practices

Addressing these items will help eliminate any questions employees may have as to how housekeeping is handled on-site, as well as set clear expectations for employees on keeping the workplace clean—therefore limiting clutter-related slips, trips and falls.

Watching for Hazards During Housekeeping

Good housekeeping also means maintaining constant vigilance. When engaging in housekeeping procedures, employees should be instructed to remove any objects or materials that may obstruct walkways or other areas with frequent foot traffic, as these items could pose slip, trip and fall hazards. This includes (but is not limited to) the following items:

- Power cords
- Empty containers
- Garbage
- Food
- Water or spills

One of the biggest slip, trip and fall hazards stems from poorly placed power cords, which can be quite common in the workplace. What's more, power cords require frequent monitoring to prevent damage, as these cords can cause electrical shock and create additional fire hazards if they contain broken insulation. Employees should be encouraged to use extra caution when working with power cords,

especially extension cords. Such cords should only be used on a temporary basis when power is needed for a short period of time. Extension cords that are wrapped around poles, taped down to the floor or look like they have been in the same place for a long period of time are not being used on a temporary basis and are likely a substitute for permanent wiring. Such improper usage can lead to slip, trip and fall injuries, as well as present elevated electrical hazards. Employers should assess their facilities to identify where extension cords are in use and remedy any instances of misuse. In any case, power cords should always be safely distanced from walking paths and stored appropriately when not in use.

Upholding General Housekeeping Best Practices

In addition to the aforementioned protocols, employers should make sure to provide their employees with the following general housekeeping best practices:

- Clean up spilled materials immediately.
- Do not let trash overflow into work areas.
- Ensure proper storage of all objects and materials on-site. Keep storage areas as clean and organized as possible. Ask a supervisor for assistance if it's unclear where to store an item.
- Do not store company equipment in aisles or walkways, as this can leave little to no room for individuals to pass through.
- Never store objects or materials on the stairs.
- Avoid leaving cleanup for the last few minutes of the day. Instead, take care of clutter immediately after completing a task.
- Refrain from piling objects or materials near fire extinguishers, sprinklers or emergency exits.

Employees who keep these practices in mind during their work shifts can make all the difference in reducing instances of potential slip, trip and fall hazards.

Improper Ladder Use

Falls from elevated surfaces are frequently listed as one of the top causes of workplace injuries. Many of these injuries occur due to a lack of basic ladder safety measures. These injuries are more common among employees who have to perform building maintenance or retrieve items from storage by way of ladders.

To help prevent ladder-related falls, employers should train their employees on ladder safety protocols. Specifically, employees should be instructed to always exercise caution when using a ladder and keep the following safety considerations in mind:

- Make sure the weight that the ladder is supporting does not exceed its maximum load rating (user plus materials). Only one person should be on a ladder at a time.
- Stay centered between the rails of the ladder at all times. Do not lean too far to the side while working. Never overreach. Instead, descend from the ladder and move it to a better position.
- Do not step on the top step, bucket shelf, or attempt to climb or stand on the rear section of a stepladder.
- Face the ladder when climbing up or down. Never leave a raised ladder unattended.
- Step down slowly from the ladder if symptoms such as dizziness or fatigue arise.
- Wear nonslip shoes at all times when on a ladder.

Employers should take note that OSHA has certain limitations on the heights of different ladders. For example, a single ladder cannot exceed 30 feet high, while stepladders are only able to be used at heights of 20 feet or less. As a result, employers should make sure their employees always select the correct ladder for the job at hand, paying special attention to ladder length and duty rating. Proper length is a minimum of 3 feet extending over the working surface.

Ensuring Ladder Safety

In addition to the previously mentioned safety considerations, employers should have employees inspect ladders before each use for any of the following loose or damaged parts:

- Steps
- Rungs
- Spreaders
- Rung dogs
- Safety feet
- Other parts

Employees should be trained to clear the area where they will be working and never place a ladder in front of a door that isn't locked, blocked or guarded. Because metal ladders conduct electricity, employees must use a wooden or fiberglass ladder near powerlines or electrical equipment.

Employees should also be instructed to confirm that all locks on extension ladders are properly engaged before placing them on a steady surface. The ground underneath the ladder should be level and firm. Large, flat wooden boards braced underneath a ladder can help level it on an uneven surface or soft ground. Straight, single or extension ladders should be set up at approximately a 75-degree angle.

Employees should be taught to always use the 1:4 ratio to ensure safety when on a ladder. This entails placing the base of the ladder 1 foot away from whatever it's leaning against for every 4 feet of height up to the point of contact at the top of the ladder. By promoting these ladder safety measures, employers can better protect their employees against falls from elevated surfaces.

Establishing a Slip, Trip and Fall Prevention Program

One of the most important steps that general industry employers can take to minimize slip, trip and fall injuries among employees is to establish slip, trip and fall prevention programs for their respective facilities. A slip, trip and fall prevention program should raise awareness of common, facility-specific hazards. All employees should be aware of this program and understand how to report slip, trip and fall hazards that they come across on-site. It's important to remember that each general industry employer should tailor their program to address their specific needs.

Such a program should identify a slip, trip and fall prevention team, consisting of employees who are specifically designated to handle all slip, trip and fall hazards. Forming this team is also a great way to determine who has responsibility and authority for meeting OSHA compliance goals within an industry. This can also be handled by the company's safety committee.

A slip, trip and fall prevention team can be assembled by allowing employees to volunteer or asking dependable and experienced employees to participate. If a general workplace safety committee already exists on-site, this committee could also form the slip, trip and fall prevention team.

In addition to identifying a team to help with prevention, a risk assessment component of the program must be developed. This risk assessment component should outline how employees will be expected to:

- Report slip, trip and fall hazards
- Perform slip, trip and fall hazard assessments (both initial and reoccurring)
- Work with management to determine corrective actions for slip, trip and fall hazards

Slip, trip and fall prevention programs require ongoing risk management efforts and a continued commitment to maintaining a safe working environment. In order for a program to be successful, management must stand behind the program and follow through on making necessary workplace adjustments.

Effective slip, trip and fall prevention programs should:

- ❑ Focus on identifying the root causes of slips, trips and falls on-site
- ❑ Prioritize correction of the root causes
- ❑ Outline clear, easy-to-follow procedures
- ❑ Include employee training on recognizing and avoiding slip, trip and fall hazards
- ❑ Incorporate annual program reviews to identify and correct potential issues and incident trends

Conducting Slip, Trip and Fall Hazard Assessments

Step 1: Develop individualized hazard assessments for each area on-site.

General industry employers should create hazard assessments for each area on-site. By creating a hazard assessment for each area, it will be easier to document and keep track of the hazards found.

Some general areas for employers to keep in mind when creating hazard assessments include:

- Indoor work areas
- Communal areas (e.g. lobbies, lunch rooms and bathrooms)
- Walkways
- Storage areas
- Outdoor spaces (e.g., patios, work areas and parking lots)
- Exits and entrances

After identifying areas to conduct hazard assessments, employers should discuss what hazards cause slip, trip or fall accidents with employees. Once these hazards are identified, employers should break down job tasks that are affected by the hazard. Each hazard likely has a unique reason it's occurring, and specific hazards can potentially lead to ongoing problems within the workplace.

Questions to ask when determining potential hazards in the areas covered by hazard assessments include:

- Where are hazards occurring?
- Who is affected by these hazards?
- What causes these hazards?
- What are the potential or documented consequences of these hazards?

If employers and their employees are proactive and there are no slip, trip or fall injuries that have previously occurred in the workplace to base hazard assessments off of, employers should consider these questions:

- What types of accidents could occur in the workplace?
- What are the consequences of these accidents?
- How could these accidents happen?
- What are other contributing factors to potential accidents?
- How likely is it that hazards will present themselves on-site?

Employers should answer these questions for each area on-site and assess hazard assessments at routine intervals (e.g., monthly, quarterly or annually). These assessments should be updated when necessary and reviewed at least yearly to ensure there are no issues or areas that are unaccounted for.

Step 2: Perform hazard assessments for each area.

Next, employers should perform hazard assessments for all areas identified in the previous step. When conducting hazard assessments, employers should look closely at each area and analyze employee movement in the space. If any hazards are identified during these assessments, they should be properly recorded, as well as rated based on severity. Severity ratings may be determined using injury or incident reporting to provide further insight on risk levels associated with particular hazards. If there are a large number of incidents that have occurred in specific areas, hazard assessments should reflect this information.

Step 3: Plan and implement corrective actions.

Once hazards and severity ratings have been determined, employers should have their slip, trip and fall prevention teams meet with management to discuss corrective action plans. If hazards are identified but never addressed, employers could face a number of consequences—including increased employee injuries, lost productivity, reduced workplace morale and a greater likelihood of receiving citations during OSHA inspections.

Any “simple fixes” should be remedied first. This may include rectifying hazards that can be quickly addressed, easily eliminated or resolved with minimal expenses. On the other hand, larger, costlier concerns may take time to fix, or associated repairs may need to be budgeted for. However, if severe hazards are identified, employers should address them as soon as possible, regardless of the time or expenses required to do so.

A productive way to take care of hazards is to work with employees in brainstorming how to eliminate or control workplace hazards. Employees work within these areas daily, so they may have some ideas on how to eliminate or reduce the injury risks stemming from certain hazards.

Corrective actions must be followed up on to ensure they were completed. In addition, it’s best for employers inspect areas once corrective actions have been implemented to determine whether there are any other risks present (e.g., new problems created by the repairs or issues that were missed originally).

Step 4: Train employees.

In some cases, the slip, trip and fall hazards employers identify may result from behavioral concerns or a lack of training among employees. In these instances, employers should better educate their employees, retraining them on key topics in an effort to reduce slip, trip and fall risks. Further, employers should provide resources on identifying slip, trip and fall hazards during annual safety training to help keep employees engaged.

Step 5: Establish a routine.

It's best practice for employers to continue auditing areas on a schedule to make sure any new hazards are discovered and addressed promptly. For example, it may be valuable to conduct assessments monthly to ensure all corrective actions are in place and identify any new risks that may have come up since the initial assessments occurred.

Appendix A

CHECKLIST | SLIP, TRIP AND FALL HAZARD PREVENTION

Date: **Review conducted by:**

Use this checklist to help identify common slip, trip and fall hazards in your workplace and actions you can take to resolve them. Make sure you customize this checklist to fit the specific needs of your business, because each workplace will have different risks.

OUTDOOR AREAS	YES	NO	SAMPLE ACTIONS TO TAKE IF YES:
Is there anything on paths, steps and fire escapes that could cause slips and trips (e.g., buildup of leaves, wet grass, moss and mud)?	☐	☐	• Set a regular work schedule for clearing paths (work on busiest areas first). • Make sure plants and trees do not overlap paths.
Are paths prone to ice buildup during winter months?	☐	☐	• Monitor weather conditions and put winter procedures in place, such as gritting. • Consider use of safe alternative routes.
Are there any uneven levels on the paths?	☐	☐	• Highlight the hazards by improving the lighting, applying contrasting colors to the slope or creating clearly marked signs.
Are there holes or potholes in the paving on footpaths?	☐	☐	• Block off the areas as a temporary solution. Ensure that barriers cannot be easily moved. • Conduct proper maintenance—fill in holes, re-lay paving and replace broken paving stones.
Are fire escapes slippery when wet?	☐	☐	• Improve the grip with slip resistant coating/strips.

DOORWAYS AND ENTRANCES	YES	NO	SAMPLE ACTIONS TO TAKE IF YES:
Are there any potential slip and trip issues with the threshold and entrance matting, such as when wet?	☐	☐	• Consider extending the mats, applying slip-resistant coating, or changing to a more slip-resistant material.
Is there water on the floor from rain or melting ice?	☐	☐	• Construct canopies over entrances, improve external drainage and keep doors closed. Consider using alternative routes. • Prevent water from spreading by fitting large and absorbent entrance mats so people can dry their shoes. • Remove any water quickly. Review cleaning procedures and introduce dry mopping. Consider introducing underfloor heating to speed up drying.
Are there trip hazards in the area, such as cables, deliveries, curled up mats or other objects?	☐	☐	• Conduct proper housekeeping. Put away cables, provide a safe delivery area, clear away boxes and equipment, and fix down mat edges or replace if necessary.

CORRIDORS AND OFFICES	YES	NO	SAMPLE ACTIONS TO TAKE IF YES:
Are there any subtle changes in floor level, such as slopes, small steps and abrupt changes from one flooring material to another?	☐	☐	• Highlight the hazards by improving the lighting, applying contrasting colors to the slope or creating clearly marked signs.
Are floors smooth in areas where contamination, such as liquids, food or condensation, can be found on the floor?	☐	☐	• Stop contamination from getting onto the floor by providing waste bins, fixing leaks, fitting lids for containers and closing doors leading from working areas. • Prevent contamination from spreading by placing drip trays beneath plants, machines and water coolers. • Remove any contamination quickly. Review cleaning procedures and spot clean spills.

Are there trip hazards in the area, such as cables, deliveries, curled up mats or other objects?	☐	☐	• Conduct proper housekeeping. Keep walkways clear, tidy away or use cable covers, provide additional storage and clear away boxes and equipment.
Are tiles or flooring becoming unstuck or curling at the edges? Are there any holes?	☐	☐	• Conduct proper repairs and maintenance by fixing down tile and carpet edges. Replace if necessary.
Is the anti-slip flooring wearing down or damaged?	☐	☐	• Replace damaged or worn flooring.
Are light levels too low to clearly see the floor?	☐	☐	• Improve lighting with new bulbs and additional lights.
Is light reflecting on smooth flooring to create a glare?	☐	☐	• Re-angle the lights or install blinds or anti-glare grills or glazing films. Consider removing the floor surface shine.

STAIRS AND RAMPS	YES	NO	SAMPLE ACTIONS TO TAKE IF YES:
Are the edges of steps hard to see, rounded, damaged or slippery?	☐	☐	• Make sure lighting is sufficient to see step edges clearly. • Highlight the edges of steps with something that has high visibility, a square edge and nonslip finish.
Are handrails available? Are they easy to reach and useable?	☐	☐	• Provide a handrail on at least one side of the stairs if the stairs are wider than 22 inches. Provide handrails on both sides and a third, middle handrail if the stairs are 6.5 feet or wider. • Handrail heights should be at least 38 inches above the stairs and be parallel to the pitch line (slope) of the flight of stairs. • Use applicable standards and regulations to determine handrail shape, diameter and distance from the wall.

Are the stair treads slippery?	☐	☐	• Conduct regular maintenance and regularly clean to remove contaminants. • Replace stair coverings with one that has better slip resistance.
Are there any ramps or slopes in and around the workplace that are difficult to see?	☐	☐	• Check and improve lighting levels and consider slip-resistant flooring.

WORK AREAS	YES	NO	SAMPLE ACTIONS TO TAKE IF YES:
As part of the work process, is contamination (e.g., fluids, solids, dust and debris) getting onto the floor? Issues with work processes can include human error, machinery leaks and spills, and process leaks and spills.	☐	☐	• Stop contamination from getting onto the floor by changing the system of work, improving the work area layout, providing bins or dust extraction and fixing leaking machinery. • Prevent contamination from spreading by using drip trays, screens, floor drainage and high-lipped sinks. • Remove all contamination quickly. Spot clean spills, dry mop spills, and vacuum/brush up dry materials.
Is condensation forming on the floor or from overhead pipework and dripping?	☐	☐	• Improve ventilation in the area and insulate overhead pipework. Consider adding slip-resistant flooring or providing slip-resistant footwear.
Is poor drainage causing a pooling of liquids on the floor?	☐	☐	• Inspect, maintain and repair floor drainage systems.
For cold storage, is there any ice buildup on the floor?	☐	☐	• Remove any ice buildup and consider providing slip-resistant footwear. • Conduct door maintenance. Check that the door closes and seals properly. If necessary, replace any seals and fix door and frame. • Prevent humidity by fitting automatic doors, curtains and other humidity controls.

Are designated walkways partially or fully blocked?	☐	☐	• Create a clear and even walkway through the workplace. • Conduct proper and regular housekeeping by tidying away cables, providing extra storage and clearing away clutter, boxes and equipment.
Are there any other trip hazards, such as uneven walkways, raised edges, holes, raised or curling carpet or tiles?	☐	☐	• Repair and maintain flooring in good condition. Replace if necessary. • Block off any area that may be an issue.
Are lighting levels too low to see clearly? Is light reflecting off flooring to create glare?	☐	☐	• Improve lighting with new bulbs and additional lights, and install antiglare grills.

BATHROOMS	YES	NO	SAMPLE ACTIONS TO TAKE IF YES:
Is the floor slippery? Is water getting onto the floor?	☐	☐	• Stop water from getting onto the floor by improving shower curtains/screens and positioning hand dryers close to sinks. • Monitor and remove water quickly. Spot clean and dry mop wet areas. • Improve floor drainage where possible and consider slip-resistant flooring.
Are taps or pipes leaking?	☐	☐	• Fix leaks and taps and perform regular maintenance. Provide drip trays as a temporary solution.

CLEANING	YES	NO	SAMPLE ACTIONS TO TAKE IF YES:
Are spills left on the floor for some time before they are cleaned?	☐	☐	• Ensure spill-cleaning equipment is made readily available for use. • Review/improve cleaning procedures and increase cleaning schedules.

Are small spills wet mopped?	☐	☐	• Institute a culture of cleaning up spills in the workplace through proper employee training and ready availability of spill-cleaning equipment. • Spot clean small spills with absorbent cloth or paper towels.
Are people allowed to walk through areas during wet mopping or when floors are still wet?	☐	☐	• Keep people off smooth, wet floors with barriers. • Reduce drying time by dry mopping floors.
Are warning signs used for wet floors or areas?	☐	☐	• Use cones and signs to warn people that the floor is wet. Remove as soon as cleaning is completed and the floor is dry.
Does the floor look dirty even after having just been cleaned?	☐	☐	• Check that the manufacturers' cleaning instructions are being followed. • Review floor cleaning method and adjust to floor type.
Are people still slipping on the floor even after it has been cleaned and dried?	☐	☐	• Make sure to thoroughly remove any buildup of polish or grease. • Review and alter floor cleaning method.
Is cleaning equipment creating a walking hazard?	☐	☐	• Coil unused equipment cables. Change power sources to nearest source. Consider using battery-powered equipment.

Appendix B
Incident Investigation Report

This form is designed to streamline the investigation process following an incident. Complete this to identify incident witnesses, the root cause of an incident and potential solutions to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

The supervisor of the employee involved in the incident should complete this form thoroughly and within 24 hours after the event whenever feasible (some investigations may take longer).

SITE INFORMATION			
Company name:		*Point of contact (name and title):*	
Street address:	*Phone number:*	*City/ZIP code:*	*Building number (if applicable):*

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION	
Name (first and last):	*Employee job title:*
Employee department:	*Supervisor name and job title:*
Body parts the employee claims were injured (check all that apply):	☐ Arm ☐ Face ☐ Torso ☐ Back ☐ Feet ☐ Legs ☐ Buttock ☐ Hands ☐ Thighs ☐ Chest ☐ Head ☐ Other: _____ ☐ Other: _____ ☐ Other: _____

INCIDENT INFORMATION	
Date:	*Location of the alleged incident:*
Time:	

Manager on duty:	*Date incident was reported:*
Description of the incident (list any property damage if applicable): **If possible, have the employee recreate the incident.**	

WITNESSES			
Name:	*Contact info (phone, email):*	*Address:*	*Employee?* ☐ Yes ☐ No
Name:	*Contact info (phone, email):*	*Address:*	*Employee?* ☐ Yes ☐ No
Name:	*Contact info (phone, email):*	*Address:*	*Employee?* ☐ Yes ☐ No

ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)			
Contributing Actions		**Contributing Conditions**	
☐ Use of safety devices	☐ Use of PPE	☐ Housekeeping	☐ Exposure
☐ Procedural issue	☐ Speed of operation	☐ Condition of surface	☐ Noise
☐ Equipment condition	☐ Lifting technique	☐ Ergonomic issue	☐ Chemicals
☐ Operator skill	☐ Recapped needle	☐ Guards/barriers	☐ Fire/explosion hazard
☐ Material handling	☐ Use of tools	☐ Tools/equipment	☐ Radiation
☐ Warning method	☐ Type of clothing	☐ Sharp object	☐ lighting/temperature/ventilation
☐ Authorization issue	☐ Awareness	☐ Inclement weather	☐ Training
☐ Other: _____	☐ Other: _____	☐ Other: _____	☐ Other: _____

THE "WHY" ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS
Repeatedly asking the question "why" can help you drill down to the root cause of an incident. For instance, if an employee slipped and fell, the line of questioning could go as follows: - **Why did they slip? Answer: The Floor was wet.** - **Why was the floor wet? Answer: It was raining and water pooled in the front of the building.** - **Why did the water pool? Answer: The tiles are improperly graded, which creates stagnant water.**
The scenario:
Why 1:
Why 2:
Why 3:
Why 4
Why 5:

ROOT CAUSE NARRATIVE
Based on your analysis, describe what caused the incident:

POSSIBLE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS			
☐ Isolate and guard the hazard	☐ Implement a procedure change	☐ Provide gloves	☐ Provide hard hats
☐ Automate a manual process	☐ Provide safety training	☐ Provide respirators	☐ Provide face shields
☐ Remove the hazard (redesign)	☐ Add signage and warnings	☐ Use safety glasses	☐ Use cut resistant clothes
☐ Provide ventilation	☐ Improve housekeeping practices	☐ Provide safety shoes	☐ Use hearing protection
☐ Use new tools or equipment	☐ Provide lab coats	☐ Other_____	☐ Other: _____

Corrective Action (Include at least one corrective action per every identified root cause.)	**Responsible Individual**	**Expected Completion Date**	**Actual Completion Date**

Report Completed By: _____ **Date of Report:** _____