

# Slips and trips

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## What's the problem?

Of all the major accidents at work that are notified to the Health and Safety Inspectorate each year, approximately 17% of these are as a result of slips and trips.

In addition, a number of complaints are received from members of the public who have sustained an injury as a result of slipping over.



These type of accidents occur in almost all workplaces and can have serious consequences, including:

- bruising and/or cuts
- muscle damage
- broken bones
- in some cases, fatality

The majority of accidents occur as a result of a floor surface becoming wet or contaminated.

This can be caused by:

- cleaning activities
- spillages
- wet weather

Accidents can also result from:

- tripping over items
- poor lighting
- changes in floor level

In many cases, the accident could have been prevented if simple cost effective measures had been in place.

In order to reduce the risk of persons being injured as a result of slips, trips and falls, employers should ensure that they have adequate arrangements in place for controlling the risks.

The main aim should be to reduce the factors that could result in a slip or trip. For example, prevent the floor from becoming wet or contaminated in the first instance. It is recognised, however, that there are times where this is difficult to control such as when spillage occurs or during wet weather.

## Who's affected? ...Everyone!

In the last year alone, the Inspectorate has been notified of members of the public slipping in shops, office workers tripping on stairs, health care workers and laundry workers slipping on wet patches, building contractors tripping over items on construction sites, waitresses, chefs and bar staff slipping on spilt food and drink, to name a few.

## What should I do?

Employers should, therefore, carry out an assessment of the risk to both employees and members of the public, and ensure that the necessary control measures are in place. Factors to consider, include:

- Is the floor likely to become wet or contaminated and if so, when and how?
- How will wet floors or contamination be dealt with if it does occur?
- Are the cleaning regimes giving rise to additional risk?
- Are there likely to be any trip hazards such as trailing cables, rubbish, rugs?
- Is the area well lit?
- Are there changes of level?
- Are employees wearing appropriate footwear?

**This list is not exhaustive**

