Good Housekeeping Prevents Slips, Trips and Falls

Slips
Wet surfaces are the leading cause of slips, though any smooth surface poses a threat. Smooth, dry surfaces are generally less slippery than wet surfaces. Floor composition greatly affects how slippery the floor will be when wet. A slip occurs when the foot comes into contact with the ground and does not have enough traction to stay in place. The result is the foot slips, balance is lost, and a person may end up falling.

- Post warning signs when mopping and leave until floor is dry
- Monitor bathrooms, kitchen areas, and other areas where water is available to be sure the floors are kept dry
- Clean up spills immediately, being sure to use proper cleanser to remove the spill completely
- Use proper cleaner to wash floors. Some flooring should not be waxed as this removes the slip resistant surfacing on the flooring
- Post spill area until dry
- Keep sand or other absorbent material available for oily spills
- Wet walkways outdoors are also a hazard and should be posted—dark surfaces are especially likely to hide the fact that they are wet
- Carpets at entrance ways not only keep the building cleaner, they dry off shoes preventing slips.
- Rugs should be utilized at entrances where there is smooth flooring. Rug length should be sufficient to allow snow/water to run off shoe so that it is dry by the time the person reaches the smooth floor surface.

Trips
Trips occur when a foot comes into contact with an unexpected object which results in a shift in the gait pattern and a loss of balance. This may ultimately end in a fall. Anything on the ground, cords, torn carpeting, boxes, garbage cans, etc. has the potential to trip someone. Particularly likely to cause a hazard is anything less than knee height because the person is less likely to visually identify the hazard. Below are a few suggestions to reduce the potential for trips to occur:

- Keep walk areas and work zones free of all obstructions
- Even lightly used areas like office floors should be kept clear
- Store items such as boxes or purses on shelves or in closets
- Use roll-around carts to hold toolboxes and equipment rather than setting them directly on the floor
- Cordon off or post warning signs around temporarily stored items or work areas
- Sweep and remove trash regularly—once or twice a day may not be enough
- Notify supervisor if there is a defect in flooring or equipment that creates a hazard

Falls on Stairways
Most falls on stairways occur on the first or last two steps. There are many steps that can be taken to reduce the chance for falling on a stairway:

- Use color differentiation on the first two and last two steps to alert anyone climbing the stairs
- Make sure slip resistant treads are intact on steps
- Keep steps dry. If being cleaned, block off stairway to prevent people from walking on wet stairs
- If carrying oversized materials, take the elevator instead of trying to navigate the stairway. Do not take stairway if you do not have a hand free to hold on to the handrail
- Always watch your feet as you are navigating stairs
- Hold on to handrails while walking up/down stairs
Our safety evaluations, reports and recommendations are made solely to assist your organization in reducing hazards and the potential of hazards and accidents. These recommendations were developed from conditions observed and information provided at the time of our visit. They do not attempt to identify every possible loss potential, hazard or risk, nor do they guarantee that workplace accidents will be prevented. These safety evaluations, reports and recommendations are not a substitute for ongoing, well-researched internal safety and risk management programs. This report does not warrant that the property inspected and its operations are compliant with any law, rule or regulation.

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- NEVER leave anything on a staircase or landing
- If you must work in a stairway:
  - If possible, block access to the stairway
  - If stairway must be used, post cautions above and below work area and keep a clear pathway past the work