

Avoidance of slips, trips and falls

Introduction

Slips and Trips and the subsequent falls are a common cause of injury. Clubs should assess the risks of slips, trips and falls and take measures to reduce those risks to an acceptable level.

What should we do?

In general, take the following actions to reduce the incidence of slips and falls:

- Keep the floor clean and dry
- Stop spills, if you can't then clean them up
- Use buckets and trays under leaks
- Deal with or report cleaning and maintenance problems
- Keep off smooth wet floors
- Keep walkways clear
- Use bins for rubbish
- Don't trail leads across walkways
- Check carpets and remove or replace any that are worn
- Check rugs and remove or replace any with turned up edges or corners

In the boathouse:

- Identify places where items (boats, oars, sculls, trestles, kitbags, etc.) should be stored
- Ensure that items are returned to the places where they should be stored immediately after use
- Encourage people to take care not to walk into riggers and other obstructions
- Consider marking the floor to identify passageways where it is safe to walk
- Consider cushioning the ends of riggers, trailer arms, etc.

What should we do about stairs?

Steps and stairs are one of the highest risk areas pedestrians will encounter. A slip or trip on stairs can result in a serious injury. Accidents on stairs may be down to design and maintenance issues or, could just as likely be related to human factors.

Ensure that stairs:

- are well lit;
- have handrails at an appropriate height that contrasts with the surroundings;
- have good slip resistance properties, particularly at the leading edge;
- have clearly marked edges; and
- are free from trip hazards or obstacles.

What should we do outside?

Slips and trips can occur outside of the buildings too, to make these less likely you should ensure that the:

- Surfaces are maintained to minimise slip and trip risks
- Vehicle and pedestrian routes and entrances are clearly marked
- External area is well lit

Outside the boathouse:

- Keep the area tidy
- Do not leave oars and sculls on the ground
- Do not permit parking in areas where boats are moved
- Have a designated safe parking place for bikes
- Encourage people to take care not to walk into riggers and other obstructions

What should we do in winter

In winter, it is also important to consider:

Lighting

There should be is enough lighting for you to be able to see and avoid hazards that might be on the ground. It is important to do this both inside and outside of the buildings, as the effect of light changes during the day. If you can't see hazards on the ground you will need to improve the lighting (e.g. new lights or changing the type of bulb).

Wet and decaying leaves

Fallen leaves that become wet or have started to decay can create slip risks in two ways, they hide any hazard that may be on the path or they themselves create a slip risk. Ensure that they are removed at regular intervals.

Rain water

Check that the external paved areas are slip resistant when wet. Discourage people from taking shortcuts over grass or dirt which are likely to become slippery when wet. Consider converting existing shortcuts into proper paths.

On new sites, before laying paths, think about how pedestrians are likely to move around the site. Many slip accidents happen at building entrances as people entering the building walk in rainwater.

Fitting canopies of a good size over building entrances and in the right position can help to prevent this. If a canopy is not a possibility, consider installing large, absorbent mats or even changing the entrance flooring to one which is non-slip.

Ice, frost, snow

Identify the outdoor areas used by pedestrians most likely to be affected by ice, for example:
- building entrances, car parks, pedestrian walkways, shortcuts, sloped areas and areas constantly in the shade or wet.

Monitor the temperature, as prevention is key. Take action whenever freezing temperatures are forecast. Use grit (see below) or similar, on areas prone to be slippery in frosty, icy conditions. Divert pedestrians to less slippery walkways and barrier off existing ones. If

warning cones are used, remember to remove them once the hazard has passed or they will eventually be ignored.

Gritting

The most common method used to de-ice floors is gritting as it is relatively cheap, quick to apply and easy to spread. Rock salt is the most commonly used 'grit'. Salt can stop ice forming and cause existing ice or snow to melt. It is most effective when it is ground down, but this will take far longer on pedestrian areas than on roads.

Gritting should be carried out when frost, ice or snow is forecast or when walkways are likely to be damp or wet and the floor temperatures are at, or below freezing. The best times are early in evening before the frost settles or well in time before people arrive.

Salt doesn't work instantly; it needs sufficient time to dissolve into the moisture on the ground. If you grit when it is raining heavily the salt will be washed away, causing a problem if the rain then turns to snow.

Compacted snow, which turns to ice, is difficult to treat effectively with grit. Be aware that 'dawn frost' can occur on dry surfaces, when early morning dew forms and freezes on impact with the cold surface. It can be difficult to predict when or where this condition will occur.

Legal Requirements

The relevant regulation is the

[The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#) require clubs to assess risks (including slip and trip risks) and, where necessary, take action to address them.

[The Workplace \(Health, Safety and Welfare\) Regulations 1992](#) require floors to be suitable, in good condition and free from obstructions. People should be able to move around safely.

Further Information

For further information see

The Health and Safety Executive guidance on slips and trips at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/SLIPS/>

How not to fall down stairs <http://www.wikihow.com/Not-Fall-Down-Stairs>

Slips and Trips Hazard spotting checklist www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ck4.pdf

Preventing slips and trips at work www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg225.pdf

Slips and trips, the importance of cleaning www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/web/slips02.pdf