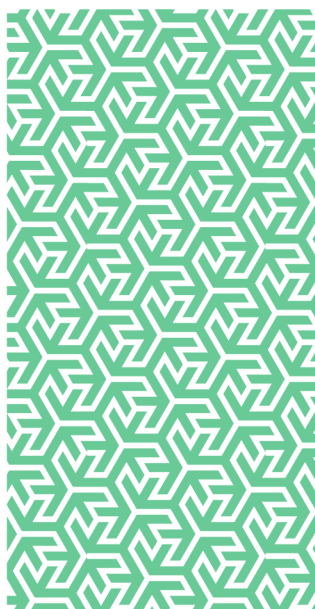




Risk control

Slips, Trips and Falls Toolkit: Risk Insight



In partnership with



Slips, Trips and Falls Toolkit: Risk Insight

Costs

Slips, trips and falls cost UK employers over £500 million per year¹

Accidents at work can lead to a variety of visible and hidden costs for businesses. Understanding these costs is crucial for effective risk management and organisational wellbeing strategies. Here's a breakdown:

Visible Costs

- **Property Damage:** Costs to repair or replace damaged equipment or property
- **Legal Fees:** Costs associated with legal proceedings if the accident leads to litigation
- **Compensation:** Payments made to employees who are injured on the job
- **Fines and Penalties:** Regulatory fines if the accident results from non-compliance with safety standards
- **Insurance Premiums:** Increased premiums due to higher risk assessments following accidents

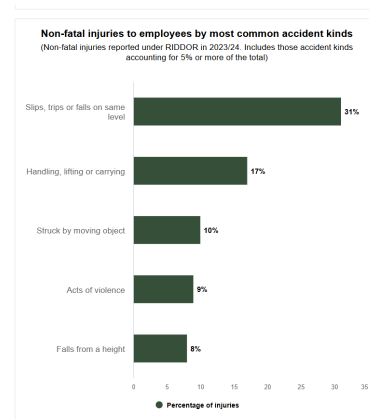
Hidden Costs

- **Lost Productivity:** Decreased output due to absent employees and disrupted workflows
- **Training and Replacement:** Costs to train new or temporary workers to replace injured employees
- **Administrative Costs:** Time and resources spent on accident investigation and reporting
- **Reduced Employee Morale:** Impact on team morale and potential decrease in overall productivity
- **Reputation Damage:** Negative impact on company reputation, affecting customer trust and business opportunities

Addressing both visible and hidden costs is essential for minimising the total cost of risk and ensuring a safe and productive work environment.

Impact on Employers

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) 2023/24 statistics show that slips, trips or falls were the most common cause of non-fatal injuries to employees in UK workplaces².



Legal Duties

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974³ (HSWA) requires employers to ensure the health and safety of all employees and anyone affected by their work, so far as is reasonably practicable. Employees have a duty to take care of their own health and safety and that of others.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999⁴ build upon HSWA and include duties for people in control of workplaces to assess risks (including slips, trips, and falls). They also require appropriate arrangements for planning, organisation, control, monitoring, and review of any measures to safeguard health and safety as identified by the risk assessment.

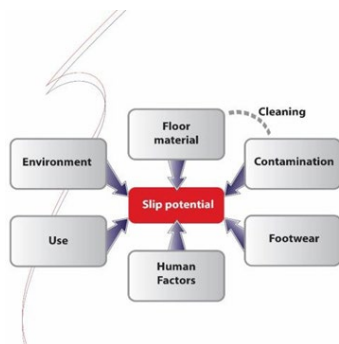
Occupiers owe a duty of care to visitors as specified by the Occupiers' Liability Act 1957⁵. The Act places a duty on occupiers of premises to ensure all reasonable steps are taken to safeguard persons from known dangers or dangers the occupier should reasonably know exist. The common duty of care is: 'A duty to take such care as in all the circumstances is reasonable to see that the visitor will be reasonably safe in using the premises for the purpose for which he is invited or permitted to be there'.

The Occupiers' Liability Act 1984⁶ confirms situations where an occupier might owe a duty of care to an 'unauthorised visitor' or 'trespasser'.

This model provides a summary of the elements to be considered during a slip risk assessment (i.e. is the floor surface suitable for the environment it is in, for the intended users and the behaviour they may exhibit?)

Further guidance on this topic can be found in the Slips, Trips, and Falls Slip Potential Model Guidance Document:

[Slips, Trips and Falls Toolkit - Flooring, Cleaning and Contamination > Risk Management Partners](#)
(rmpartners.co.uk)



Human Factors

Falls are often attributed to human error. Though human error is likely to have been a factor, it is rare that human error is the sole cause. Factors such as medical conditions, physical dexterity, and alcohol or drug use should be considered.

If individuals are distracted, perhaps by a conversation or interaction with a mobile communication, they may be less aware of their surroundings or actions.

Employees should raise any safety concerns they have and be consulted when identify appropriate solutions. Their ideas should be involved in the development of any new or revised procedures, processes or risk assessments with the aim of reducing slips, trips and falls.

Further guidance on this topic can be found in the Slips, Trips, and Falls Human Factors Guidance Document:

[Slips, Trips and Falls Toolkit - Human Factors > Risk Management Partners](#) (rmpartners.co.uk)

Flooring – Slip Resistance

The best way to measure the slip resistance of flooring in different conditions is to test it with the pendulum test. The pendulum correctly reproduces the way we walk and therefore accurately quantifies the risk of a slip when a person walks on the surface. Importantly the pendulum test gives valid information when testing contaminated floors, something that other commonly used floor slip tests do not.

Only the pendulum test is recommended for specifying the slip resistance of flooring by the Health and Safety

Executive. Further information from the HSE can be found here [Assessing the slip resistance of flooring](#) (hse.gov.uk)

The method is based on a swinging, imitation heel (using a rubber sole sample), which sweeps over a set area of flooring in a controlled manner.

The slipperiness of the flooring has a direct and measurable effect on the pendulum test value (PTV) given.

Further guidance on this topic area can be found in the Slips, Trips, and Falls Slip Resistant Flooring Guidance Document:

[Slips, Trips and Falls Toolkit - Slip Resistant Flooring > Risk Management Partners](#) (rmpartners.co.uk)

Environment

Workplaces should be suitably lit to help avoid slip and trip accidents. Where trip hazards cannot be removed, such as changes in level, these should be highlighted using visual contrast.

Further guidance on this topic can be found in the Slips, Trips, and Falls Entrances and the Slips, Trips, and Falls Stairs and Steps Guidance Documents:

[Slips, Trips and Falls Toolkit - Entrances > Risk Management Partners](#) (rmpartners.co.uk)

[Slips, Trips and Falls Toolkit - Stairs and Steps > Risk Management Partners](#) (rmpartners.co.uk)

Contamination

Contamination can be any substance on the floor surface, whether it is a wet or dry substance. By removing the contamination and returning the floor to a clean state, the risk of slipping will be significantly reduced. A risk assessment should identify all sources of potential contamination and introduce controls to prevent the contamination reaching the floor, or to prevent its spread, e.g. building canopies, entrance matting, drip trays around machines, and conveyors.

Where constant or frequent contamination on a floor, with a poor Slip Resistance Value (SRV), is foreseeable and users cannot be prevented from using the floor, the use of warning signs or cones will not absolve a duty of care. In these circumstances, employers and / or occupiers should plan to replace or treat the floor so that the SRV or surface roughness of the floor is suitable for the type of contamination expected.

Further guidance on this topic area can be found in the Slips, Trips, and Falls Contamination Guidance Document:

[Slips, Trips and Falls Toolkit - Contamination > Risk Management Partners \(rmpartners.co.uk\)](#)

Cleaning and Inspection

A clearly defined cleaning regime and inspection system is a crucial element in preventing accidents. Systems need to be created to maintain floors in a dry and clean state. It is essential that documentation is maintained to demonstrate these systems have been adhered to.

Practical systems to consider and adapt to the circumstances include:

- Appropriate methods and materials should always be used
- Employee training is provided to ensure the correct cleaning technique is applied for the flooring type and contamination encountered
- All employees participate in a 'clean as you go' regime where the methodology should be 'dry cleaning'
- Thorough 'wet cleans' are designed to cleanse a floor and remove all contamination
- Where practicable, wet cleans should be cordoned off until the floor has returned to a dry state
- Cleaning is undertaken at a time of day when pedestrian movements are at their lowest
- Active monitoring techniques are recorded to demonstrate employees are working to 'clean as you go' routines. These can be included in manager / supervisors Key Performance Indicators and more formally through departmental audits
- The value of active monitoring systems that record the cleaning and inspection regimes can help to demonstrate that at the time of the accident, all had been done that one could reasonably expect to maintain the floor in a clean and safe condition
- In premises, which the public have access to, regular inspections of the thoroughfares and toilets should be recorded at least hourly
- Warning signs should be used to alert people to slip risks, for example, during cleaning, after a spill, or during wet weather and removed after the hazard is removed
- When selecting specialist cleaning contractors, a process of due diligence will assist in the selection of competent firms and their ability to carry out the work required. In addition, employers or occupiers should ensure that they hold current

insurance protection with sufficient financial cover to indemnify them in a worst-case scenario. Additionally, verification of a contractor's safety policy, safety performance and accident rates should be included in any due diligence programme. Look for evidence of personnel being well trained in safety management, such as an accredited IOSH qualification and trade qualifications, like The British Institute of Cleaning Science (BICS). Contractors should be provided with enough information to undertake the contract safely.

Further guidance on this topic area can be found in the Slips, Trips, and Falls Cleaning Regimes Guidance Document

[Slips, Trips and Falls Toolkit - Cleaning Regimes > Risk Management Partners \(rmpartners.co.uk\)](#)

Footwear

The selection of footwear for employees will form part of the Personal Protective Equipment risk assessment. The risk of slipping needs to be considered alongside other risks to the foot such as falling objects or materials piercing the sole. Research into the slip resistance of footwear highlights:

- The properties of the shoe sole are highly relevant in determining slip resistance
- The wear rate and the ability to easily clean the sole influences the surface roughness levels throughout the life of a shoe sole
- Wearing flat shoes that maximize the area of contact with the floor, especially at the heel, can reduce the number of slip accidents
- To improve the slip resistance in contaminated conditions, the shoe sole should generally have deeper cleating and a well-defined tread pattern

GRIP is a footwear slip resistance-rating scheme developed by the HSE to actively reduce slips.

Footwear manufacturers who have signed up to the scheme will be able to display the rating, from 1 to 5 stars, on their product packaging, allowing footwear buyers to select the most appropriate footwear for their work environment.

Further guidance on this topic can be found in the STF Footwear Guidance Document

[Slips, Trips and Falls Toolkit - Footwear > Risk Management Partners \(rmpartners.co.uk\)](#)

Trip Risk Management

The difference between slips and trips is the causative element. Primarily, trips are caused by poor housekeeping.

Risk assessments need to address common causes of tripping (e.g. trailing cables, uneven edges to flooring or gratings/covers, loose mats/carpet tiles, temporary obstructions, unseen changes in floor level). By removing these obstructions, or making them more visible to the person, tripping incidence should reduce.

Many organisations have achieved considerable success and improved housekeeping conditions by utilising the “5S Philosophy”⁷:

- **Sort:** Neatly arrange all equipment and materials, remove unnecessary items
- **Set in Order:** All items should be positioned in the most appropriate location so they can be easily accessed, removing clutter and avoiding obstructions
- **Shine:** Conduct cleaning regularly
- **Standardise:** The process across departments and locations for a consistent approach
- **Sustain:** The 5S philosophy for continuously improvement

Further guidance on this topic can be found in the Slips, Trips, and Falls Managing Trips Guidance Document:

[Slips, Trips and Falls Toolkit - Managing Trips > Risk Management Partners \(rmpartners.co.uk\)](#)

Accident Investigation

For slips and trips, it is important that all mitigating factors are recorded as part of the accident investigation including the condition of the floor, any contamination present, what the person was doing, the environmental conditions, quality of lighting, footwear worn etc. It is important the investigator records facts and does not express opinions.

Maintain adequate data on slips, trips, and falls to include accident and near miss numbers, accident frequency, accident severity (days lost), root cause of accident, location of accident, time of day etc.

Further guidance on this topic can be found in the Slips, Trips, and Falls Incident Investigation Guidance Document:

[Slips, Trips and Falls Toolkit - Incident Investigation > Risk Management Partners \(rmpartners.co.uk\)](#)

Winter Weather – Snow and Ice

An employer or occupier may be liable if they take no reasonably practicable steps to guard against the risks of snow and ice on their premises. Practical action to

deal with winter weather should include the implementation of a cold weather policy. Steps must be taken to follow that policy including training on implementation and use. Identify who is responsible for doing what, for example, caretaker, owner of a business, manager or supervisor. Checklists should be used to include action on arriving at a premise to eliminate or reduce the risk of slips and falls due to snow or ice.

Weather forecasts should be reviewed regularly. Signage should be displayed for known slippery areas. Signage should be erected by the first person on site. Ensure there is an ample supply of grit available.

Winter Weather Policy – Key Features

1. This must be proactive so anticipate the formation of ice
 2. Regular review of weather forecasts – not too far in advance
 3. Staff must be trained to do the following:
 - a. Consider forecasts
 - b. Make decisions on whether to treat
 - c. Consider how to treat
 4. Decisions must be tailored to the location
 5. Review decisions regularly and as close in time as possible. Conducting a formal risk assessment is key
 6. Allocate appropriate resources to treat
 7. If likely to be a delay in treating, take interim measures to address the risk such as:
 - a. Cordon off hazardous areas
 - b. Install signage
 - c. Make announcements
 - d. In the case of a school, it may be appropriate to close the premises until the worst of the weather is over
 8. Consider the type of treatment:
 - a. Effectiveness
 - b. Cost
 - c. Time to deploy
 - d. Method to apply
 9. Retain evidence of the decision-making process
- The policy must be monitored to take consideration of the following:
1. Is compliance with the weather forecasts effective?
 2. Are there any features peculiar to location?

3. Record accidents and near misses
4. Consider other factors such as lighting (particularly relevant in car parks)
5. Have appropriate investigative steps:
 - a. Ensure a copy of weather forecast is kept for a specific period
 - b. Log any decision in relation to treatment and response to it
 - c. When was the decision made?
 - d. When was that decision communicated and actioned?
 - e. Why was it actioned in a particular way at a certain location?

Further guidance on this topic area can be found in the Slips, Trips, and Falls Winter Weather Management Guidance Document.

[Slips, Trips and Falls Toolkit - Winter Weather Management](#)
> [Risk Management Partners \(rmpartners.co.uk\)](#)

Summary

A structured risk management approach to addressing slip, trip and fall accidents should be developed within all organisations. If followed, this should lead to reductions in accident frequency rates and improved claims defence ability.

Our Slips Trips and Falls Toolkit is designed to assist our clients in establishing risk management policies and systems to prevent slip and trip accidents and to develop documentation that can be used in the effective management of slip and trip claims. The toolkit is intended as a template for you to adapt to your own business activities and premises.

References

1. [Workplace costs of slips and trips - Slips and trips – HSE](#)
2. [Statistics - Non-fatal injuries at work in Great Britain \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)
3. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/contents>
4. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1999/3242/contents>
5. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/5-6/31/contents>
6. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/3/contents>
7. [5S \(methodology\)](#)

Risk Management Partners and Gallagher Bassett would like to thank QBE European Operations for the material used to shape this toolkit segment.

Further information

For access to further RMP Resources you may find helpful in reducing your organisation's cost of risk, please access the RMP Resources or RMP Articles pages on our website. To join the debate follow us on our LinkedIn page.

Get in touch

For more information, please contact your broker, RMP risk control consultant or account director.

contact@rmpartners.co.uk



Risk Management Partners

The Walbrook Building
25 Walbrook
London EC4N 8AW

020 7204 1800
rmpartners.co.uk

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