

Slips, Trips, and Falls

Slips, trips, and falls cause a significant number of injuries and severe harm annually and can result in claims made against healthcare entities. As a result, healthcare entities will need to have the appropriate measures in place across their facilities and properties to help ensure a safe and healthy environment for clients and employees.

As part of their overall approach to minimizing slip, trip, and fall risks, healthcare entities will need to consider a range of safety hazards and address them through the implementation of a comprehensive risk management plan to help prevent injury and severe harm.

The following guidance highlights key areas of considerations for healthcare entities to help them adopt the appropriate measures to protect its clients and employees on their properties from slip, trip, and fall safety hazards. It should not be seen as an exhaustive list and should be used in conjunction with internal policies and procedures, as well as in compliance with local laws and regulations.

Surfaces

- Indoor areas (such as client care areas, offices, hallways, bathrooms)
 - Indoor areas should be free of the following conditions:
 - Uneven surfaces or edges
 - Cracks, bulges, breaks, or tears
 - Exposed cords and cables
 - Wet or waxed areas
 - Garbage and other debris
 - The following measures should be in place in indoor areas:
 - High-traffic areas are monitored to quickly identify any safety hazards
 - Adequate lighting lumens/brightness is provided
 - Carpets are installed with seamless edges and breaks, where required
 - Rugs or mats are placed in entryways and securely fastened, where required
- Outdoor areas (such as walkways and patios)
 - Outdoor areas should be free of the following conditions:
 - Insufficient drainage
 - Uneven surfaces or edges
 - Exposed cords and cables
 - Cracks, bulges, breaks
 - Garbage and other debris (for example leaves and branches)
 - The following measures should be in place in outdoor areas:
 - High-traffic areas are monitored to quickly identify any safety hazards
 - Accumulation of snow, ice, and rain (pooling) is monitored
 - Adequate lighting lumens/brightness is provided
 - Contrasting color strips are used to draw attention to any uneven surface level, where required
 - Rugs or mats are placed in exterior door/entryways and securely fastened, where required

RISKCHECK

BY MARSH CANADA LTD.

Spring 2023

- Stairways
 - Stairways should be free of the following conditions:
 - Uneven surfaces or edges
 - Cracks, bulges, breaks
 - Garbage and other debris (e.g. leaves, branches)
 - The following actions should be in place on stairways:
 - Anti-slip surface/strips are installed on steps and landing
 - Adequate lighting lumens/brightness is provided
 - Contrasting color strips are installed on step edges
 - Handrails, barriers, railings are secured, sturdy, and unobstructed
- Ramps
 - Ramps should be free of the following conditions:
 - Uneven surfaces or edges
 - Cracks, bulges, breaks, or tears
 - Garbage and other debris
 - The following actions should be in place on ramps:
 - Anti-slip surface/strips are installed on ramp and landing
 - Adequate lighting lumens/brightness is provided
 - Contrasting color strips are used to indicate the impending incline or decline from the level landing
 - Handrails, barriers, railings are secured, sturdy, and unobstructed
- Parking lots
 - Parking lots should be free of the following conditions:
 - Insufficient drainage
 - Uneven surfaces or potholes
 - Cracks, bulges, breaks
 - Garbage and other debris
 - The following should be in place in parking lots:
 - Parking spots are clearly marked
 - Wheel stops are brightly painted
 - Speed bumps are brightly painted
 - Accumulation of snow, ice, and rain (pooling) is monitored
 - Adequate lighting lumens/brightness is provided

Footwear

- Complete an assessment of job environments and activities in order to determine the appropriate footwear for employees in each role
- Mandate that employees wear the appropriate and properly fitted footwear suitable for their job environment and activities, which may include footwear with specific sole tread patterns or slip-resistant soles

RISKCHECK

BY MARSH CANADA LTD.

Spring 2023

Lighting

- Ensure that all lighting is projecting the appropriate level of lumens/brightness to interior (for example in offices, hallways, bathrooms) and exterior areas (for example in walkways, stairways, ramps, and parking lots) on the property; and
- Report insufficient lighting lumens/brightness and coverage in interior (for example in offices, hallways, bathrooms) and exterior areas (for example in walkways, stairways, ramps, and parking lots) on the property.

Inspection

- Establish an inspection policy, which should outline the required frequency of inspections (for example, hourly or daily) of interior and exterior areas, as well as activities taken to report and address any safety hazards
- Conduct regular inspections of the property's interior and exterior areas; immediately report or address any of the following:
 - Slip, trip, or fall hazards
 - Garbage, broken glass, and other debris
- Conduct regular inspection of the handrails, barriers, and railings to ensure they are sturdy.

Maintenance

- Establish a maintenance policy, which should outline detailed information as it relates to the following:
 - Preventative (scheduled) maintenance program, including maintenance schedule and actions taken to repair, clean, or remove any safety hazards
 - Demand (un-scheduled) maintenance program, including service level standards and actions taken to repair, clean, or remove any safety hazards
- Conduct preventative and demand maintenance to interior and exterior areas; it should address the following:
 - Reporting safety hazards for repair, cleaning, or removal
 - Posting signage advising of safety hazards
 - Inspecting areas prior to allowing clients to reaccess areas and removing safety signage
- Establish a centralized documentation repository to contain inspection and maintenance reports and work orders.

Signage

- Deploy clear and visible safety hazard signage to draw attention to slip, trip, and fall hazards when the floor or ground surface is:
 - Awaiting maintenance
 - Undergoing maintenance
- Deploy clear and visible wet floor signage to draw attention to wet and/or slippery areas and when the floor or ground is:
 - Awaiting maintenance
 - Undergoing maintenance or awaiting to dry up
- Deploy perimeter barrier (such as caution tape or railings) to prevent access to specific area due to slip, trip, and fall hazards when the floor or ground surface is:
 - Awaiting maintenance

RISKCHECK

BY MARSH CANADA LTD.

Spring 2023

- Undergoing maintenance
- Post signage in interior and exterior areas that provides contact information for:
 - Emergency services
 - Maintenance request

Summary

Healthcare entities should address slip, trip, and fall safety hazards to help ensure a safe and healthy environment for its clients and employees. Through the development and implementation of a comprehensive risk management plan, appropriate measures can be put in place to help prevent injury and severe harm resulting from these accidents within their facilities and across its properties.