



# QBE Slips, Trips, & Falls on the Level

Slips, trips and falls (STF) are the number one cause of major injuries to employees; accounting for 37% of HSE reported accidents, over 50% of public related injuries and many civil negligence claims. A slip, trip or fall may be the root cause of other classified injuries such as falls from height and musculoskeletal disorders. Employers have historically treated STF incidents as inevitable and trivial but in reality they can lead to serious injuries and large compensation awards. Effective solutions may often be simple, cheap and easy to implement.

## MINIMUM STANDARDS

1. Risk assessments are undertaken that specifically address STF potential.
2. STF management information is available and considered during the risk assessment process. This will include accident frequency and severity, root cause and location etc.
3. Documented controls are in place to reduce contamination and obstructions on floors.
4. An appropriate footwear policy for employees is defined and implemented.
5. Cleaning, inspection, housekeeping and maintenance regimes are defined, implemented and documented.
6. Responsibilities of employees and management in controlling STF risks are defined and contained within job descriptions.

## BEST PRACTISE

- There are realistic board set improvement targets for STF accidents and claims.
- Area STF risk assessments are undertaken to the principles of the HSE's "Slip Potential Model" found in CIRIA guidance. Instruments such as a floor surface roughness meter and/or pendulum are used to accurately determine the slip resistance value (SRV) and ultimate suitability of floor surfaces.
- Flooring is selected at the design stage considering the environment, potential users and behaviours they may exhibit. Existing floors are replaced or surface roughness enhanced where practicable if the SRV of existing flooring is unsuitable and where foreseeable contamination cannot be effectively controlled by other means.
- Risk assessments address foreseeable sources of contamination. Controls are introduced to isolate contamination or prevent it reaching the floor.
- Cleaning regimes & methodology are carefully selected and documented for the potential floor contamination e.g. clean as you go methodology should be dry clean. Wet cleaning is only carried out if segregation is possible or in times of no/lowest footfall.
- Footwear is selected taking into account relevant required characteristics such as wear rate, cleanability, and cleating and tread pattern. This information may come from the manufacturer, the results of ramp tests, or controlled in-house testing.
- The organisation has implemented a good housekeeping philosophy (e.g. "5S" - sort, set in order, shine, standardise and sustain), has clear and defined pedestrian routes with adequate space, and has a system of routine maintenance to remedy defects.

## LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

General common law duties to provide a safe place / system of work apply. The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires a 'suitable and sufficient' risk assessment. The Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992 set out specific responsibilities in respect of ensuring a safe workplace. Those in control of premises have duties to visitors under the Occupiers Liability Act 1984. Insofar as claims defence is concerned the employer/occupier needs to be able to demonstrate they have taken all reasonable steps to identify and control the risk.

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## GUIDANCE & USEFUL INFORMATION

- HSE: Web Pages [www.hse.gov.uk/slips](http://www.hse.gov.uk/slips)
- QBE Issues Forum : Slips, Trips & Falls (February 2006)
- HSE: HS(G)155 & 156 Slips & Trips (156 is Guidance for Food Industry)
- CIRIA: C652 – "Safer surfaces to walk on – reducing the risk of slipping"

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