

Ten Steps to Avoid a Slip and Fall

Select products with proven slip resistance, and regularly test your floors.

Responsible manufacturers go to great lengths to build slip resistance into their floor care products. These companies also confirm the slip resistance of their products through independent testing companies such as Underwriters Laboratories™. Look for “UL Approval” on the label, or ask for written documentation that the products you are planning to use meet industry standards for slip-resistance. In addition, manufacturers often provide instruments such as the Sellmaier™ Floor Slip Testers, which can be used to periodically test the slip resistance of your floors.

Choose your floor care supplier carefully.

There are hundreds of companies formulating floor care products, but the quality of expertise and end-user support varies widely. Know your supplier before you buy. A few questions to ask: To what extent do they stand behind their products? Will they support you in the event of a slip/fall? Are their promises in writing? Is appropriate product technical data readily available? Who actually manufactures the products? How big are they in terms of sales and scope of distribution? How is overall distributor support? Do they have an up-to-date manufacturing plant? Before you choose your floor care supplier, you should feel comfortable that the one you select has the know-how, resources and commitment to back you up in the event of a problem.

Establish an effective floor maintenance program.

With the help of your supplier, establish and communicate a written program, including a floor care procedures manual or outline. Make sure everyone reads and understands your floor care manual. Train your staff, monitor performance and re-train as necessary.

Test slip resistance of floors regularly, and record your findings.

Use an instrument like the Sellmaier™ Floor Slip Tester to regularly check the safety of your floors. By doing so, you demonstrate your concern for safety and document the condition of your floors in the event of litigation. Many companies use the Sellmaier™ tester, because it is accurate and easy to use.

Maintain a clean floor.

Train personnel to constantly monitor floors and to respond immediately to spills, debris or other hazards such as misplaced or haphazard floor mats. Damp mop spills promptly. Clean or replace soiled “spot mops” to avoid spreading contaminants elsewhere. With finished resilient tile, scrub and re-coat slippery areas sprayed with furniture polish, lubricants or silicone. Sweep or dust mop often.



Warn of wet or hazardous floors.

Always place Wet Floor signs where maintenance is being performed. Pylons, rope and signs should cordon off the actual cleaning area. Be aware of locations that are susceptible to wet conditions such as entrances and in produce areas. Place warning signs as soon as conditions require them.

Use good housekeeping practices.

When possible, perform floor maintenance when traffic is minimal. Never leave equipment and chemicals unattended if the building is open. After use, put them away. Do not allow extension cords to intersect traveled areas. Remove obstructions that may cause accidents.

Use walk off mats.

Place mats of sufficient size at all entrances to help remove dirt and moisture. Mats should be kept in good condition and in place at all times. Additional mats are recommended during inclement weather. Replace mats that do not lie flat.

Immediately protect the public from a spill.

While sending for and awaiting a clean-up person, it should be the duty of the first employee on the scene to guide the public around the spill. If possible, this person should immediately remove the spill and any debris from the floor. For large spills, the clean-up person should use pylons, ropes and "wet floor" signs to close off the area.

Keep a written record.

After performing floor maintenance, document it by recording the maintenance step performed (sweeping, re-finishing, etc.), the time the cleaning took place, the area cleaned and the person who performed the operation. Ideally, use a form that includes the above data, which may be quickly filled in (a checklist with date and time blanks, for instance). Such a form verifies that a responsible floor care program has been implemented. A supervisor should check written records regularly and inspect the floor to confirm that the documented procedure was actually performed.

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