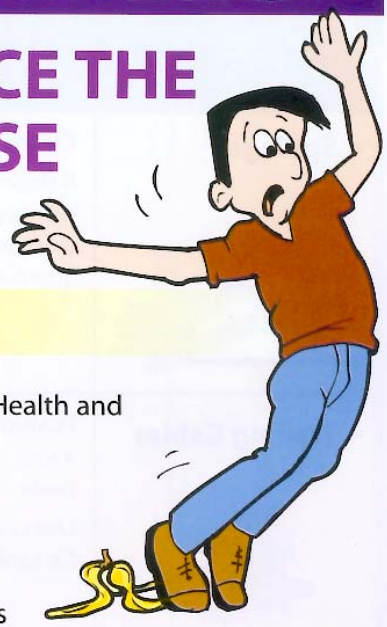
SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS...

HOW EMPLOYERS CAN REDUCE THE SINGLE MOST COMMON CAUSE OF INJURIES AT WORK?



How Extensive is the Problem?

Every year over 33,000[1] slip, trip and fall related injuries are reported to the Health and Safety Executive and Local Authorities or District Council in the UK.

This type of accident accounts for 1/3[2] of all major injuries reported.

They cost employers more than £300million[2] per year through damages, administration and insurance costs, lost production and temporary absences from work. In a typical supermarket chain £2million[3] is paid out in claims relating to slips, trips or falls each year.

They also cost society around £1000 million[3] per year in medical costs, social security costs and loss of potential output.

The majority of slips, trips and falls can be prevented using simple and inexpensive measures, examples of which are contained within this leaflet.

Where You Stand Within the Law

The ***Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978*** places a general duty on employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of anyone who may be affected by their work. Employees are also required not to endanger themselves or others. This means that **everyone in the workplace has a responsibility to control slip, trip & fall risks.**

The ***Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000*** require every employer to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of his employees whilst they are at work, and also to persons not in his employment, but who may be on the premises e.g. customers.

They also require appropriate arrangements for effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of any measures to safeguard health and safety identified by the risk assessment.

The ***Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations (NI) 1993*** require floors and traffic routes to be suitable, free from obstruction and in such condition so as not to expose any person to risks to his health or safety. These regulations also require suitable and effective measures to be taken to prevent any person falling a distance likely to cause personal injury.

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[1] Source: HSE Books HS(G) 155 'Slips & Trips': Guidance for Employers on identifying hazards & controlling risks

[2] Source: HSE INDG 225 'Preventing Slips, Trips & Falls at Work"

[3] Source: HSE 'Health & Safety Laboratory Pedestrian Slipping Workshop Oct 2000'

So What Do You Need To Do?

HAZARD	SUGGESTED ACTION	MEASURES REQUIRED **Think about your business. What action do you need to take?*	RESPONSIBILITY **Complete this column with details specific to your business*
• **Spillages**	Cleans spills immediately. If floor is wet after cleaning use appropriate signs to warn others and arrange alternative bypass routes.		(e.g. employer in conjunction with all employees)
• **Trailing Cables**	Position equipment to avoid cables crossing pedestrian routes. Use cable covers to securely fix cables out of harm's way.		
• **Rubbish & other obstructions**	Keep the floor around the work areas and all walkways clear. Remove rubbish regularly and do not allow it to build up.		
• **Rugs/mats**	Ensure all mats are securely fixed and do not have curling edges.		
• **Slippery surfaces**	Assess the cause and treat accordingly e.g. use the appropriate cleaning agents and methods. Outdoors, sweep leaves off paths and salt/sand during frosty conditions.		
• **Change from wet to dry surfaces**	Locate doormats where changes are likely, eg. entrances. Warn of risks by using signs.		

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• **Poor lighting**	Improve lighting levels and position of light fittings to ensure even lighting of all floor areas.		
• **Changes of level e.g. stairs and slopes**	Improve lighting. Highlight changes in level e.g. with yellow paint. Provide handrails. Provide non-slip surfaces.		
• **Ladders**	Train staff in safe use. Always position and secure correctly. Check regularly for defects.		
• **Smoke/steam obscuring view**	Improve ventilation and warn of danger. Redirect people away from risk areas.		
• **Unsuitable footwear**	Ensure suitable footwear is worn. If the type of work requires special protective footwear the employer is required to provide it free of charge.		
• **Open vertical drops**	Install effective barriers around vertical drops. Restrict access to dangerous areas. Use warning signs.		

PRODUCED BY YOUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT IN ASSOCIATION WITH NORTHERN GROUP SYSTEMS (ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH) AND THE NORTHERN INVESTING FOR HEALTH PARTNERSHIP.

Sources of Further Information

Your local Environmental Health Department is responsible for ensuring health and safety standards within a wide range of businesses.

This service is located within your District Council offices, where Environmental Health Officers will be available to provide support and advice in relation to slips, trips and falls and other occupational health and safety issues.

The Environmental Health Department can also offer advice on areas such as:
Food Control, Consumer Safety, Environmental Protection and other regulatory services.

An additional source of health and safety information is the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland, telephone **028 9024 3249** and **www.hseni.gov.uk**

Northern Group District Councils

Antrim Borough Council
The Steeple
Antrim
BT41 1BJ
Tel: 028 **9448 1319**

Ballymena Borough Council
'Ardeevin'
80 Galgorm Road
Ballymena BT42 1AB
Tel: 028 **2566 0300**

Ballymoney Borough Council
Riada House
14 Charles Street
Ballymoney BT53 6DZ
Tel: 028 **2766 2280**

Carrickfergus District Council
Town Hall
Carrickfergus
BT38 7BL
Tel: 028 **9335 1604**

Coleraine Borough Council
Cloonavin
66 Portstewart Road
Coleraine BT52 1EY
Tel: 028 **7034 7034**

Cookstown District Council
Council Offices
Burn Road
Cookstown BT80 8DT
Tel: 028 **8676 2205**

Larne Borough Council
Smiley Buildings
Victoria Road
Larne BT40 1RU
Tel: 028 **2827 2313**

Magherafelt District Council
50 Ballyronan Road
Magherafelt
BT45 6EH
Tel: 028 **7939 7979**

Moyle District Council
Sheskburn House
Mary Street
Ballycastle BT54 6QH
Tel: 028 **2076 2225**

Newtownabbey Borough Council
Mossley Mill
Newtownabbey
BT36 5QA
Tel: 028 **9034 0000**

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