

# Advice for before and after a slip and fall injury.



Slips and falls are the cause of 15% of all accidental deaths.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), slips and falls are responsible for the majority of general industry accidents. They cause 15% of all accidental deaths, and are second only to motor vehicles as a cause of fatalities.<sup>1</sup>

## What's the risk to your business?

A slip and fall can happen anywhere an employee or a member of the general public walks while on your premises. Mishaps can occur in parking lots, lobby areas, kitchens, bathrooms, employee break rooms, warehouses and shop areas, as well as on sidewalks and any exterior walkways. No business owner wants to see an employee or customer get hurt. Plus, as today's headlines often remind us, slip and fall injuries are often the basis for damaging lawsuits.

## Ways to steer clear of slip and fall dangers.

- **Keep all walkways and stairways free from debris and clutter.**
- **Make sure handrails on all stairs and steps are secure.** All steps should have a nonskid surface or be equipped with abrasive strips.
- **Inspect all tables and chairs/booths** weekly for any needed repairs.
- **Place rubber-backed mats in lobby areas** when inclement weather is expected. This will help soak up water tracked into the building.
- **Mop up any spilled fluids on the floor immediately.** Place "wet floor" signs in the spill area until the floor is dry. Keep your mops and mop buckets clean and free of grease with the use of an approved detergent for your floor type, and hang your mops up to dry after each use. This will not only provide you with a cleaner and safer floor, but your mops will also last longer.
- **Use a grease-cutting solution when mopping up floors with a greasy coating.** Kitchens, fast food customer service areas and shop areas all present this hazard. A portable floor dryer can help to speed up the drying process.
- **Put on slip-resistant footwear.** When working in areas where floor tile may have a greasy coating, the soles of these shoes reduce the potential for a slip and fall.

<sup>1</sup> *Walking/Working Surfaces*, <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/walkingworkingsurfaces/> (Downloaded 8/25/15)

Preventing Slips and Falls

- **Use floor tile with a grit built into the top finish.** This tile is used mostly in kitchen areas, where the grit helps shoes grip the floor.
- **Do not use any type of extension cords in general public areas.**
- **Paint tire stops and curbs** in walking paths “traffic yellow” for visibility. Be sure to repaint as needed.
- **Remove snow and ice from parking lots and sidewalk areas promptly.** To help prevent refreezing of melted snow and ice, also use ice melt and sand, as needed. The grit from the sand will help provide traction when walking in these areas. Completely clear curb and gutter areas that can be hidden from a person’s view.
- **Direct gutter downspouts** to drive water away from walkways.
- **Inspect sidewalks and parking lots regularly** for tripping hazards such as cracks or uneven surfaces. Make any necessary repairs promptly and detour walking traffic until fixed.
- **Routinely inspect all interior and exterior lighting** to guarantee proper illumination. Conduct monthly tests of all emergency lighting.

**Act fast when an injury occurs.**

Injuries can range from low-impact falls not needing any medical care to “very serious” and requiring immediate medical attention, especially head and neck injuries, broken bones and open wounds. Whenever someone suffers a slip and fall:

- **Immediately check the condition of the injured person.** Call an ambulance to take the person to the hospital if the injury is severe. Offer minor first aid if you have a trained first aid person on staff.
- **Obtain basic information from the injured person.** Use an incident report form to record the individual’s name, address, phone number and a description of his/her injury.
- **Promptly report the injury** to the Nationwide® claims unit at 1-800-421-3535. A quick response by a claims adjuster to the injured person can help ensure efficient and appropriate claims handling.



Be better prepared to clear sidewalks by checking local weather reports regularly.

Providing solutions to help our members manage risk.<sup>SM</sup>



For your risk management and safety needs, contact Nationwide Loss Control Services: 1-866-808-2101 or [LCS@nationwide.com](mailto:LCS@nationwide.com).