

# 10 Steps to Prevent Slips, Trips and Falls

Slips, trips and falls are a major occupational safety issue. They are also one of the most preventable workplace injuries that can be controlled with a trusted safety program. Fortunately, there are basic precautions employers can take to create a safer and more compliant workplace. The following 10 steps will guide you on the way to prevent slips, trips and falls in your facility.

## Step 1: Inspect Your Facility

### • Know Your Workplace

In order to improve working conditions, employers must first thoroughly inspect the facility. Help uncover danger zones by looking specifically into past slip, trip and fall incidents by type and location.









### • Keep it Clean and Clutter-Free

A clean and clutter-free facility is a safer facility. Review housekeeping processes, stock up on absorbent materials and warning signs, and determine if certain areas need additional attention.

## Step 2: Mark Aisles and Passageways

Visual cues help employees more easily and safely navigate a clear path. Use floor marking tape to identify passageways, equipment and storage areas, hazardous flooring and forklift traffic.

OSHA has several regulations requiring that permanent aisles and passageways be clearly marked. Still, there are no current government-mandated or widely accepted industry standards that recommend what colors to use when marking floors. Keeping that in mind, here is a useful chart to help you establish floor marking consistency in your facility.

Color		Area
	Yellow	Aisle ways, traffic lanes and work cells
	White	Equipment and fixtures not otherwise color coded (workstations, carts, floor stand displays, racks, etc.)
	Blue, Green &/or Black	Materials and components, including raw materials, finished goods
	Orange	Materials or products held for inspection
	Red	Defects, scrap, rework and red tag areas
	Red & White	Areas to be kept clear for safety/compliance reasons (areas in front of electrical panels, firefighting equipment and safety equipment, such as eyewash stations, safety showers and first aid stations)
	Black & White	Areas to be kept clear for operational purposes (not related to safety and compliance)
	Black & Yellow	Areas that may expose employees to special physical or health hazards

## Step 3: Provide Traction on Slippery Surfaces

Eliminate and control slippery surfaces. Keeping your feet firmly on the floor means having effective traction and taking the right steps to eliminate slippery surfaces.

### To prevent injuries, make sure:

- Floors are clean and dry
- Stairs, landing areas and hazardous slip areas must have anti-slip tape or material on them that withstands grease and oil
- The right floor materials are used in the right areas, based on slip hazards. Use mats, absorbents and anti-slip flooring when needed



## Step 4: Improve Stair Safety

Because stairs are one of the most common areas in your workplace for a slip, trip or fall to occur, take measures to keep stairways safe.

### Regarding stair safety, this means:

- All treads should be reasonably slip-resistant
- Stair nosing should have a non-slip finish
- Anti-skid cleats are used to mark stairs and improve safety
- Keeping stairways clean and dry



## Step 5: Mark Emergency Evacuation Routes

When it comes to potentially dim-light and smoky conditions of an emergency, you should be prepared. During an emergency, employees need to be able to quickly and safely exit the building, with enough visibility that slips, trips and falls can be avoided. Glow-in-the-dark floor and stair markings and directional signs can help lead the way for safer evacuation in unexpected conditions.





## Step 6: Post Safety Signs and Labels

The first line of defense in protecting workers is putting the right signs in the right places. Warning signs need to tell workers at-a-glance of nearby hazards, such as equipment leaks, uneven surfaces and other potential obstacles. Effective signage includes a clear header, bright colors, bold text, languages aligning with workforce needs and intuitive infographics.

### ANSI Signage:

Under OSHA's November 2013 update, users can now use either 535.2 & Z535.5 or the previous standard from 1967-1968. The ANSI Z535 signs allow for clearer messages with a descriptive header, a legend containing the hazard and visual pictogram to help convey the safety message.



## Step 7: Warn of Temporary Hazards

While workplace signs and labels are a more permanent solution to identify hazards, sometimes, facilities need a more temporary option. When you need a temporary option for short-term hazards, such as a spill, mark it with cautionary floor stands, barricade tape, and warning posts and chains. Temporary options put signs into place when needed with the option of removing them once the area no longer poses a threat.



## Step 8: Inspect Scaffolding and Ladders

Although 60% of accidents happen on same-level surfaces, 40% occur from elevation. Keeping this in mind, the next step in keeping your workplace safe is inspecting the elevated equipment that is used by your facility: scaffolding and ladders.

Regularly inspect scaffolds and ladders for damage, faults and wear. Additionally, use inspection tags to note inspection dates and the authorized employee who performed it, as well as the next due inspection date.



## Step 9: Control and Clean Oil and Spills

No matter how hard you try to keep your floors clean and dry, leaks, drips and spills will still occur. In order to combat oily film, slow drips from machinery, or a spilled cleaning chemical, create a process for cleaning all types of spills. Invest in absorbent products, such as pads, rolls, socks, pillows, mats, rugs and kits that are designed to meet the absorbency and size needs of potential leaks, drops and spills in your facility.



## Step 10: Train Your Employees

Employee training is one of the most important steps to establishing an effective slip, trip and fall prevention program. Employees need to know why slips, trips and falls occur, how they can be avoided and how to respond when one occurs.

Provide employees with the tools, training and support they need to effectively prevent and respond to slips, trips and falls. Preventative measures like this are necessary to decrease employee injuries, declines in productivity and the costs of an accident.



**Not sure where to start when you need to evaluate your facility?**

Seek an on-site assessment from a third party. With an outsider's perspective, you can identify hazards you might have previously overlooked and gain insight in developing an improved safety program.