

## Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

## Cleaning industry - Slips, trips and falls

### Why are slips, trips and falls a problem?

Slips, trips and falls are common in all industries, including the cleaning industry. Although not often thought of as serious, such incidents can result in serious injury, if, for example, a slip, trip or fall occurs:

- near a moving vehicle resulting in a crushing injury
- on a hard floor or stairs resulting in a fracture or sprain
- while carrying a heavy load resulting in a back injury.

Cleaners are at risk of a slip, trip or fall when:

- walking on slippery floors after mopping
- vacuuming around fixtures and furnishings
- working in cluttered spaces
- collecting and disposing of rubbish
- carrying equipment on stairs
- doing water blasting.

### Some possible solutions for slips, trips and falls

Slips, trips and falls often occur because of the characteristics of the work environment such as floor surfaces, lighting and housekeeping. To reduce the risks, you may need to discuss any problems with your clients or the building owner and encourage them to improve conditions, for example:

- increasing the slip resistance of flooring, particularly on ramps and slopes
- clearly marking steps and changes in floor heights

- making sure damaged floors and walkways are repaired immediately
- providing enough lighting and ventilation during cleaning operations to do the task safely (which may include those times outside of normal operating hours)
- providing plenty of room for cleaners to load, unload and store equipment
- removing excess clutter and obstructions from areas that cleaners need to access
- clearly marking walkways and ensuring materials are not stored in these areas
- avoiding spills and contaminants on floors by fixing leaky equipment and pipes, and ensuring any spills or leaks are cleaned up immediately.

There are also things you can do to minimise the risks, for example:

- Avoid walking on slippery floors (e.g. after mopping).
- Complete all other tasks before mopping.
- Select appropriate cleaning methods for non-slip floors (slip resistant floors can make mopping difficult).
- Select appropriate attachments to give control over the direction and volume of the spray of water and cleaning products.
- Spray cleaners on to a cloth to avoid overspray on the floor.
- Use cleaning products that do not create a slip hazard.
- Use non-slip mats for wet/slippery areas.
- Use signs and barricades to warn of wet/slippery areas.
- Do not climb on objects or surfaces that are not intended as access points.

- Always use step ladders appropriately, e.g. do not go higher than the second top step, do not stand on top plate and do not step from the ladder to another surface.
- Maintain equipment such as ladders to prevent failures.
- Provide workers with appropriate slip-resistant footwear, where necessary.

For more information on slips, trips and falls and other workplace health and safety issues call 1300 369 915 or visit [www.worksafe.qld.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au)

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