

## Slips, trips and falls

'read out'

### Here is an example of an incident in WA.

A young worker in a café suffered a serious fracture to her ankle when she slipped on a flattened cardboard carton, which had been placed on the floor. The floor had just been cleaned by staff close to the end of the day and the cardboard was put down to maintain the cleanliness of the floor.

'ask'

### Q. What factors contributed to the incident?

#### **Possible answers:**

- *the floor was wet and slippery*
- *the cardboard presented a surface likely to lead to a slip or trip injury*
- *the floor was cleaned whilst employees were still using the facility to serve customers*
- *the cardboard had been laid down in an area where staff regularly had to walk in the course of their work*

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Slips and trips are the second most common cause of injury after manual handling.

Industries that experience a high proportion of slips and trips are manufacturing; health and community services; construction and the retail trade. Slips and trips are a common cause of injury to personal care and nursing assistants, cleaners and sales assistants in particular.

Slips, trips, and falls are a significant problem affecting every workplace, from factory floor to office. They can result in serious injury and lengthy amounts of time off work.

### **Workplace safety and health is everyone's responsibility**

Our employer has a duty of care to provide a safe workplace and systems of work, information instruction and training and an opportunity for workers to consult about OSH. In relation to slips, trips and falls this would include identifying hazards, assessing risks and managing the hazards.

'ask'

### Q. So what's going to cause us to slip, trip or fall at work?

#### **Possible answers:**

- *unstable, loose, or uneven surfaces like broken tiles or torn carpet*
- *equipment, boxes, materials blocking walkways*
- *slippery floor surfaces from spilt substances such as fluid, mud or oil*
- *type of flooring or surface texture like wood, concrete, or vinyl*
- *stairs or steps; carrying stuff etc that obscures the view of the floor*
- *inadequate lighting*
- *inadequate footwear*
- *improper use of ladders*
- *exposure to chemicals that make you lose your balance*
- *being hit by a moving object.*

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A risk assessment should be undertaken to determine level of risk, and appropriate controls, giving us the opportunity to discuss issues and negotiate suitable arrangements for reducing slips, trips and falls.

Consultation between employers and employees and safety and health representatives and committees is an important part of the risk management process to identify hazards before injury, illness or incident occur and develop measures to eliminate or reduce the associated risks.

As individuals we have a responsibility to take care to protect our own safety and health and that of others affected by our work and to abide by procedures and policies in relation to OSH. We should all be provided with appropriate information and training to allow us to fulfil that obligation.

'ask'

### Q. So what's going to prevent us slipping, tripping or falling at work?

#### **Possible answers:**

- *good housekeeping protocols, including rubbish removal*
- *storing equipment correctly*
- *using ladders and steps correctly*
- *reporting damage to floors and surfaces*
- *clearly marking walkways*
- *staying on marked walkways*
- *implementing a clean and clear walkway policy*

- *attaching mats into the floor surface*
- *restricting access to areas that are potentially hazardous*
- *providing ramps instead of steps where the height of floor levels change*
- *restricting tasks to suitably trained workers*
- *providing adequate aisle width*
- *providing adequate lighting*
- *using warning signs*

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**It's the little things that could cause a slip trip or fall, so we all need to work together to prevent it happening.**

'ask'

**Q. Before I finish, is there anything that you can identify that we could be doing better in this workplace to prevent slips, trips and falls?**

*Take notes of people suggestions...don't panic if there aren't any takers.*

'read out'

**OK, unless anyone has any questions, thanks for listening to me.**

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