

# 'Watch Your Step'

A promotional campaign including workplace inspections



Slip accidents are no joke - they cause thousands of major injuries at work each year



Tripping hazards are generally easy to spot and straightforward to deal with

## Slips and trips (S&T) at work

Pedestrian slipping and tripping is the commonest cause of injuries in UK workplaces. Each year slips and trips cause over 11 000 major injuries, over 80% of which result in fractures. Over 90% of those injured are absent from work for at least one week.

The costs of these accidents to the UK economy and employers have been estimated at £800 million and £500 million respectively. Sectors with the highest reported incidence of major injuries include construction, public administration, food, health services, transport and warehousing, postal services, retail and hospitality.

## Typical causes and those at risk

- Over 50% of major injuries result from S&T on surfaces and structures (floors, pavements, steps and stairs).
- Spillages of wet and dry substances cause over 10% of major injuries.
- Trips over materials, cables, products, furniture and fittings cause another 10%.
- Human factors (poor perception of risks and failures to identify, report and manage them) play a major part.
- Workers particularly at risk include those in health care, hospitality, postal and construction work, drivers, process and warehousing operatives and sales assistants.

## What inspectors expect to find

- A robust management system to identify problems and take action.
- Positive commitment demonstrating that S&T risks are taken seriously at all levels.
- Effective control, where reasonably practicable, of work activities and environmental factors that cause accidents.

## Top tips

- Assess the risk.
- Prioritise - sort out higher-risk areas first.
- Choose sensible solutions - they are often simple.
- Keep floors dry and free from obstacles.
- Train and empower workers - to recognise risk and take action.

## Want to know more?

Free guidance is available from the HSE website [www.hse.gov.uk/slips](http://www.hse.gov.uk/slips) and from HSE Infoline on 0845 345 0055:

- *Preventing slips and trips at work* INDG225
- *SAT tool/Slip Assessment Tool* (a software tool available on the above website)
- *Managing sickness absence and return to work in small businesses* INDG399

This note has been prepared by Health and Safety Executive to assist duty holders during the 'Watch Your Step' campaign. If you wish to discuss the contents please contact HSE Infoline on 0845 345 0055, or by fax 0845 408 9566, or by e-mail: [hse.infoline@natbrit.com](mailto:hse.infoline@natbrit.com)  
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