

## Preventing slips, trips and falls

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### What is the problem?

Slips, trips or falls occurring where community services are performed.

### What are the risks?

Workers can experience musculoskeletal injuries (eg sprains, strains, fractures and soft tissue injuries) from slips, trips or falls.

Common sources of risk in internal environments include:

- uneven floor areas
- poorly maintained floor surfaces
- slippery floor surfaces (eg from cleaning products and /or methods of cleaning)
- wet or dry floors from water, grease, oil, dust or paper
- cluttered or poorly lit work areas or passages
- no aids or inappropriate aids to reach objects stored above the ground (eg standing on chairs to reach objects)
- spills.

Common sources of risk in other locations include:

- poor lighting (eg when getting in or out of vehicles)
- weather (eg frost, rain, heat)
- wearing footwear that does not match the environmental conditions
- uneven ground surfaces
- growth of plant material (eg moss, lichen, grass)
- pets or animals.

### What are solutions to the problems?

#### Systems

- Before services are provided, employers should identify the risks and put risk controls in consultation with workers and health and safety representatives.
- Provide reporting processes so safety issues can be identified and fixed as soon as possible.
- Schedule and record regular inspections and maintenance of all areas of the workplace and all equipment.

- Provide workers with information, instruction, training and supervision in relation to work procedures and the use of equipment and aids.
- Keep hallways and corridors clear of equipment, rubbish and electrical cords.
- Install extra power points to avoid stretching electrical cords across floors.
- Keep stored items at a suitable height to avoid the need for climbing to reach them.
- Provide suitable equipment for reaching objects or performing work above shoulder height (eg step platforms with handrails provide a larger, more stable work surface than ladders).
- Ensure non-slip footwear is worn.

#### Floors, ground surfaces and lighting

- Maintain floor and ground surfaces. Replace uneven or damaged surfaces that may present trip hazards (eg damaged carpets, mats, tiles or vinyl).
- Install slip-resistant surfaces on stair treads, ramps and on other hazardous walking or working surfaces.
- Place anti-slip mats at entrances.
- Keep outdoor surfaces free of leaves, mud, clippings, paper and remove moss or slime.
- Improve lighting in conjunction with providing highly visible markings in poorly lit areas.
- Clean up spills immediately, regardless of how small the spill is.
- Clean floors outside common working hours. If not practical, introduce a system so people do not walk on surfaces until they are dry.

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# A Health and Safety Solution Preventing slips, trips and falls

## Other locations

- Ensure footwear has slip resistant soles, adequate support and rounded heels that have sufficient contact with the ground.
- Schedule services in external locations during daylight hours.
- Use torches and backup batteries for night services in external locations.
- Use suitable routes, entry and exit points, and parking and activity areas.
- Match footwear to weather conditions.
- Ask owners to secure animals before entering private properties.

## Further information

### WorkSafe Advisory Service

Toll-free 1800 136 089

[info@worksafe.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@worksafe.vic.gov.au)

[worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://worksafe.vic.gov.au)

### Related WorkSafe publications

*Manual Handling Code of Practice, 2000*

*Working safely in community services, 2006*

*Working safely in visiting health services, 2006*

*Injury hotspot – Community support services, 2008*

*WorkSafe OHS compliance kits –*

*Children’s services, disability services, home care, community support services*

*Volunteer health and safety –*

*A handbook for community service organisations, 2008*

### Other related publications

*Victorian Home Care Industry OHS Guide, 2005*

Available from [worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://worksafe.vic.gov.au)

and [health.vic.gov.au](http://health.vic.gov.au)

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