

Avoiding Slips, Trips & Falls

Inside the Classroom/School

There are apparently innocent looking objects that are used in most, if not all, schools for the advantage of doing a better job. There are also situations or circumstances which are necessary to do in order to complete the job. Sometimes, these same objects, situations or circumstances lead us to unwanted or undesirable outcomes.



Examples:

“The teacher tripped and fell in the doorway of the classroom as she was exiting. She is experiencing pain to the right shoulder and knee. The left ankle in the back has swelling.”

“The assistant to the teacher was walking down the stairs when she tripped over her feet causing her to fall. The employee injured her knees and right ankle.”

“Employee was cleaning up and she slipped on the wet floor and fell. Employee injured her right knee.”

“Claimant, a volunteer parent, fell backwards in the classroom as she tripped over an extension cord and struck her head. Claimant was transported by ambulance to the hospital for evaluation in case of injury to the neck or head.”

Nowadays we need to know what additional behavior is associated with the risks to the slip, trip and fall incidents inside the classroom or school. Distractions are one of the most recent associated behaviors added to the list. A distraction is, *“a thing that prevents someone from giving full attention to something else: something that makes it difficult to think or pay attention: something that amuses or entertain you so you do not think about problems, work, etc.: a state in which you are very annoyed or upset.”*

Most Common Risks in the Classroom:

- Poor friction/traction between footwear and walking surface
- Slippery surfaces (wet floors and leaks)
- Uneven surfaces (bunched floor mats, electrical cords or bookbags on the floor)
- Step risers on stairs that are not uniform in height

Preventing or Avoiding Risks:

Finding the root cause to the incidents or circumstances will help controlling and/or avoiding future incidents.

Controlling Possible Risks:

- Provide periodic training to the staff on how to stay alert to prevent distraction.
- Eliminate uneven floor surfaces.
- Clean up floors and working surfaces promptly and frequently when they become wet. Provide warning signs for wet floor areas. Use slip-resistant footwear.
- Look for obstacles or spills in pathway – A visual scan of your path should help identify obstacles that may spree you up. Avoid these obstacles, as well as spills in your path. Be especially careful in unclearly lit areas.
- Re-lay or stretch carpets that bulge or have become bunched.
- Provide good lighting in all working areas.
- Instruct the staff to use the handrail on stairs, to avoid undue speed, and to maintain an obstructed view of the stairs ahead of them, when necessary ask for help.
- Make sure stairs have proper handrails; that threads and risers are maintained, and that threads have slip resistant surface.
- Eliminate cluttered or obstructed work areas and keep file cabinet drawers closed.
- Temporary electrical cords that must cross pathways should be taped or anchored to the floor.
- Keep student backpacks out of the main hallways.
- Establish a solid footing – Watch your balance – Place your feet squarely on steps. When walking up or down, use handrails for added steadiness.



Thinking with the end in mind will lead you to be part of the solution!

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