

Slips, Trips & Falls: *The UK's Most Common Injury*

Causes, prevention, housekeeping standards, RIDDOR reporting and your right to a safe working environment.



Last reviewed: August 2026



HSE · HSWA 1974 · RIDDOR



England, Scotland and Wales

ukworkrights.co.uk

In Northern Ireland, similar duties come from Northern Ireland's own health and safety law. Contact HSENI (Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland), not the HSE.

Why slips and trips matter

- Slips and trips are the **most common cause of non-fatal workplace injuries** in the UK
- Over **30% of all major injuries** at work result from slips, trips and falls on the same level (HSE)
- They cost UK employers over **£500 million per year** in lost production and other costs
- Most are **entirely preventable** through good housekeeping and management
- Common causes: **wet or contaminated floors, poor lighting, unsuitable footwear, trailing cables, uneven surfaces, clutter**
- Higher risk industries: **catering, healthcare, construction, cleaning and retail**

✓ SIMPLE TO PREVENT

Good housekeeping, prompt spill cleaning, appropriate footwear and adequate lighting prevent the vast majority of slip and trip accidents.

How to prevent slips, trips and falls

✓ HOUSEKEEPING

- Clean spills immediately — use wet floor signs
- Keep walkways clear of cables, boxes and equipment
- Report damaged flooring promptly
- Ensure adequate drainage in wet areas

💡 FOOTWEAR

- Appropriate footwear for the environment is essential
- Anti-slip soles for wet or oily floors
- Safety footwear where required by risk assessment

✓ ENVIRONMENT

- Adequate lighting — especially on stairs and in storage areas
- Contrasting colours on step edges
- Anti-slip flooring or mats in high-risk areas
- Clear signage near changes in level

⚠ DON'T IGNORE IT

Report every near-miss. Near-misses predict accidents. A slip with no injury today is a broken hip next week.

RIDDOR — when must injuries be reported?

1

Record in the accident book

Employers who normally employ 10 or more people at the same premises (and all mines, quarries and factories) must keep an accident book — make sure every injury, however minor, is recorded in it. Keep a copy for yourself.

2

RIDDOR reportable — fatal and specified injuries

Report to HSE within 10 days: fractures (not fingers, thumbs or toes), amputations, injuries likely to cause loss of sight, crush injuries to the head or torso, serious burns, scalping, and loss of consciousness from a head injury or asphyxia.

3

RIDDOR — over-7-day absence

If a worker is absent or cannot do their normal work for more than 7 consecutive days (not counting the day of injury), report to HSE within 15 days.

4

Report online or call HSE

Report online at hse.gov.uk/riddor, or call 0345 300 9923 for fatal and specified injuries to workers only. Failure to report a RIDDOR-reportable incident is a criminal offence.

Frequently asked questions

Q What if a visitor or customer slips on our premises?

In England and Wales you have a duty of care to visitors on your premises under the Occupiers' Liability Act 1957; in Scotland the Occupiers' Liability (Scotland) Act 1960 applies. A visitor injury must be recorded and may be RIDDOR-reportable if the specified criteria are met. Your employer's public liability insurance would normally cover injury claims.

Q Is a wet floor sign enough protection?

It helps, but it is not sufficient on its own. The underlying hazard (the wet floor) must be dealt with — either by cleaning up, using appropriate drainage or applying anti-slip treatment. A sign merely warns; it does not remove the risk.

Q Can I claim compensation for a slip at work?

If the slip was caused by your employer's failure to maintain a safe workplace, you may have a personal injury claim. Seek legal advice promptly — limitation periods apply (generally 3 years from the date of injury).

Q Do I have to wear the footwear my employer provides?

Yes — if your employer provides and requires appropriate footwear as a safety measure, you must wear it. Refusing to wear required PPE could make you partly liable if you're subsequently injured.

Delivery notes & attendance record

Before you start

The most common cause of workplace injury and the easiest to fix. Walk the area together and point at real hazards rather than talking in the abstract.

Questions to ask the team

1. Where are the worst spots here when it rains or freezes?
2. Who is responsible for clearing a spill, and how quickly does it happen?
3. Are there trailing cables or trip hazards right now that we could remove?
4. Is the lighting good enough on stairs and in walkways?

The law behind this talk

Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 (regs. 12 and 13); Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 reg. 3

Employers must give workers comprehensible information, instruction and training on the risks they face — Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 s.2(2)(c) and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 reg. 10. Keep the record below as evidence that you did.

Attendance record

Topic

Slips, Trips & Falls: The UK's Most Common Injury

Date

Site / location

Delivered by

Actions agreed

Next talk due

Attendees

Name

Signature

Use the Print handout button to print this record. General guidance only, not legal advice. This toolbox talk is generic material and is not a substitute for a suitable and sufficient risk assessment by a competent person. Employers remain responsible for their duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

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Slips & Trips

free guidance

Get plain-English guidance on your rights and your employer's legal duties.

HSE INFOLINE

0300 003 1747

hse.gov.uk

ACAS

0300 123 1100

acas.org.uk

CITIZENS ADVICE

0800 144 8848

citizensadvice.org.uk

UK WORK RIGHTS

Slips & Trips

ukworkrights.co.uk/toolbox-slipstrips.html

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