

# Safety Zone: The Impact of Slips, Trips and Falls in Healthcare

Data for the healthcare industry from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that injuries resulting in days away from work due to slips, trips and falls (STFs) were 38.2 per 10,000 employees, which is 90% greater than the average rate for all other private industries combined. Hospitals, nursing and residential care facilities are particularly prone to these injuries.

Not only are STFs a leading cause of workers' compensation claims, but they are the leading cause of occupational injury for people 55 years and older. This is especially important considering the healthcare industry is recognized for attracting older, more experienced workers. Aside from medical bills, indirect costs, including staffing adjustments, replacement worker on-boarding, training and future insurance costs, can triple the direct costs to employers over time.

## Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls

Accidents are likely to happen for any number of reasons, but the most common include:

- Slipping on wet surfaces
- Tripping on uneven surfaces, worn-out mats, obstructions or debris in walkways
- Sudden movement, inattention and unsafe behaviors

Preventing STFs requires a recognition of the hazard, implementing steps to prevent it, and focused training of all staff on site. Cleaning and drying spills, removing walkway obstructions and clutter are everyone's direct responsibility unless policy states otherwise. If you can't fix the problem because you're busy doing something else or don't have the proper equipment, you need to isolate the hazard and report the issues immediately. The problem must be corrected before it causes an accident.

The condition of walking surfaces, location and storage of equipment, adequate lighting, preventive maintenance and immediate corrective action are all things that prevent accidents. Additionally, good housekeeping projects an image of a well-run facility you can be proud of.

Steps everyone can take to help eliminate slips, trips and falls:

- Keep floor surfaces clean and dry, especially near showers and in hallways
- Clean up spills immediately
- Stand and announce spills or mark them with a "wet floor" sign to alert others of the hazard
- Obey wet floor signs and make sure they are removed when the hazard is abated

## Contact Info:

PHONE: 888.486.7466

WEB: [www.amtrustfinancial.com](http://www.amtrustfinancial.com)

EMAIL: [AskLC@amtrustgroup.com](mailto:AskLC@amtrustgroup.com)

AmTrust maintains this article as a service for its customers. This information is intended to give you a place to start when finding information about a particular safety question. This article is not intended to provide authoritative answers to safety and health questions. Before using the information here, the accuracy and appropriateness of the information to your specific situation should be verified by a person qualified to assess all the factors involved.

This article contains hyperlinks to information created and maintained by other public and private organizations. Please be aware that we do not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness or completeness of this outside information. Further, the inclusion of pointers to particular items in hypertext is not intended to reflect their importance, nor is it intended to endorse any views expressed or products or services offered by the author of the reference or the organization operating the site on which the reference is maintained.



- Let your supervisor know of floor defects like cracks, uneven or loose tiles and carpet
- Keep aisles and walkways clear of obstructions, equipment and debris that can cause trip hazards
- Hold on to the railing going up or down the stairs
- WALK – don't run!

Steps for facilities to consider:

- Enforce a slip-resistant shoe dress code among all workers
- Use no-skid waxes and high traction flooring and coatings in shower and kitchen areas
- Consider a "one-side" equipment storage policy to keep a clear and straight path down hallways
- Use the same "one-side" policy when washing and drying floors
- Make sure there is adequate lighting in all areas
- Use mats for extra traction at transitions from showers to hallways and entries during bad weather
- Repair structures and fixtures like leaking roofs, faucets and drains to eliminate slip hazards

OSHA provides useful guidance on safety standards and STF prevention tips on their website: <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/hospital/hazards/slips/slips.html>

And for additional information and resources on this topic and other safety and risk management subjects, visit the [Healthcare Resources](#) page on the [AmTrust Loss Control website](#).