



AmTrust North America
An AmTrust Financial Company

Safety Zone

The Impact of Slips, Trips and Falls in Healthcare

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports slips, trips and falls (STF) account for nearly 20% of all U.S. workplace injuries and 15% of workplace fatalities. 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 from 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 isn't so hard if you know what to look for and take precautions. Cleaning and drying spills, removing walkway obstructions and clutter are your direct responsibility. If you can't fix the problem because you're busy doing something else or you don't have the proper tools, then you need to isolate the hazard and report the issues immediately. It's vital that the problem is 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
- 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 AmTrust Loss Control website: amtrustfinancial.com/LossControl.

AmTrust distributes this e-newsletter as a service for its customers. It is provided in the spirit of professionals sharing their work with each other. The information provided in this document is intended for use as a guideline and is not intended as, nor does it constitute, legal or professional advice. It is not intended to provide authoritative answers to safety and health questions. AmTrust does not warrant that adherence to, or compliance with, any recommendations, best practices, checklists or guidelines will result in a particular outcome. 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.

CONTACT INFO:

PHONE: 888.486.7466 ext. 363275
WEB: www.amtrustnorthamerica.com
EMAIL: AskLC@amtrustgroup.com

MAILING ADDRESS:

AmTrust North America
2605 Enterprise Road, Suite 290
Clearwater, FL 33759