

SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS

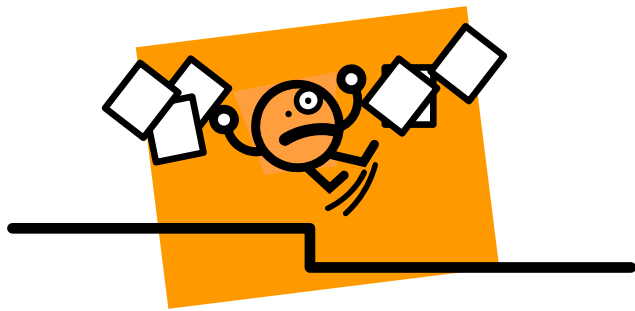


The most common cause of injuries in schools is slips, trips and falls.

THERE'S A FRACTION TOO MUCH FRICTION

Basically, slips, trips and falls are caused by too little friction or too much friction and not enough gravity! Add in a good helping of Murphy's Law and you'll be slipping on banana peels and falling down stairs in no time. The important thing is to try and create conditions which minimise the likelihood of a fall.

Many schools have applied non-slip, coloured nosing to steps. It is important that these nosings are not too high, otherwise you are creating a new trip hazard. Once in place, you need to monitor their wear to ensure they remain effective.



Teachers often pile up books and papers and then carry them between rooms, usually in a hurry and trying to talk to students while on the go. This is not just a manual handling hazard, but you create issues with balance and lines of sight that can result in a bad fall, particularly if you are trying to negotiate stairs at the same time.

Autumn creates additional slip, trip and fall hazards. Fallen leaves, twigs and seed pods on external pathways are hazards. Leaves can be very slippery and some seed pods are like ball bearings. Cleaning fallen leaves from gutters is another seasonal hazard.



CHECK YOUR SCHOOL FOR HAZARDS:

- Is lighting adequate?
- Are floors/floor coverings damaged?
- Are stairs uniform depth and width?
- Do steps have appropriate anti-slip nosings?
- Are handrails functional?
- Are procedures in place for reporting and cleaning of spills?
- Are there procedures for decreasing water on floors in wet weather?
- Are appropriate shoes being worn?
- Do work practices cause obstructed vision or upset balance?
- Are there procedures for working at heights?
- Are external paths cleared of hazards?

WHAT CAN I DO?

Review!

Talk to staff about near misses, review incident/accident reports, inspect regularly for hazards. If you know the risks, you can start to control them.

Eliminate the hazard!

Apply non-slip flooring to wet areas.

Use absorbent flooring materials at building entrances.

Apply appropriate non-slip nosing to steps and ensure it is monitored and maintained.

Ensure handrails are in place, appropriate height and maintained. In junior schools, dual height handrails are appropriate.

Ensure floors are even, check carpets are fixed.

Cover external pathways.

Reduce the hazard!

Improve lighting, particularly in corridors and stairways.

Install convex mirrors at corners in corridors and stairways.

Maintain outdoor pathways - remove moss and clear plant matter and rubbish daily.

Ensure backpacks do not clutter hallways.

Change equipment or materials!

Install umbrella holders at entry points for rainy days.

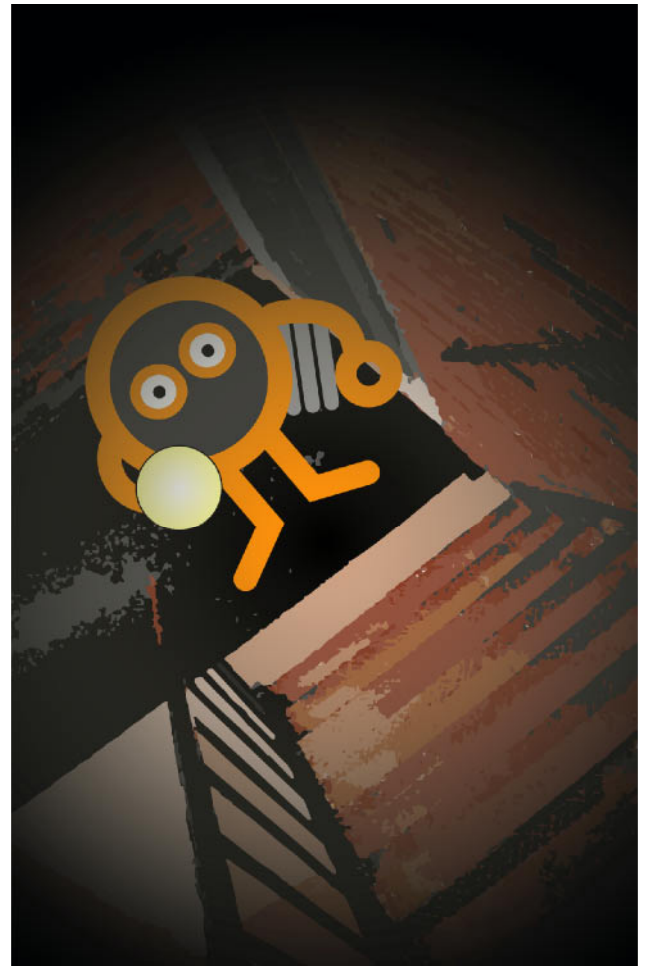
Consider matting for rainy days - a non-slip backing must be used and be sure it doesn't create a trip hazard.

Change work practices!

Don't overload yourself! Take two trips and use a backpack, bag or trolley as appropriate.

Wear suitable shoes.

Establish systems for immediate clean up of spills.



CHECK YOUR SUCCESS:

Once you have identified the risks and put in place measures to control them, you must schedule regular reviews.

- Did the solution work?
- Did it create another hazard?
- Have incidents/accidents decreased or changed?

The answers to these questions will determine what further action you need to take.

NEED HELP?

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