

Toolbox Safety Talks

Slips, trips and falls

SafeWork SA

information > advice > support

Talk about safety at work

Take ten minutes at 10am, or at any other time of the day, to talk with your team about workplace safety. This training resource is designed to help you deliver short presentations covering a series of work health and safety topics.

READ OUT

Here is an example of a slips, trips and falls incident.

A young café worker suffered a serious fracture to her ankle when she slipped on a flattened cardboard carton on the floor. As it was close to the end of the day, the floor had just been cleaned and the cardboard put down to maintain the cleanliness of the floor.

ASK THE QUESTION

What factors contributed to the incident?

Possible answers:

- *the floor was wet and slippery*
- *the cardboard presented a surface likely to lead to a slip or trip injury*
- *the floor was cleaned while workers were still using the facility to serve customers*
- *the cardboard had been laid down in an area where staff regularly had to walk in the course of their work.*

READ OUT

Slips and trips are the second most common cause of workplace injury, after hazardous manual tasks.

Industries that experience a high proportion of slips and trips are manufacturing, health and community services, construction and the retail trade. In particular, slips and trips are a common cause of injury to personal care and nursing assistants, cleaners and sales assistants.

Slips, trips and falls are a significant problem affecting every workplace, from factory floor to office. They can result in serious injury and lengthy amounts of time off work.

Workplace health and safety is everyone's responsibility

A Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) has a duty of care under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)* to provide a safe workplace and systems of work, information, instruction, training and an opportunity for workers to consult about work health and safety. In relation to slips, trips and falls, this would include identifying hazards, assessing risks and managing the hazards.

ASK THE QUESTION

So what causes us to slip, trip or fall?

Possible answers:

- *unstable, loose or uneven surfaces like broken tiles or torn carpet*
- *equipment, boxes and materials blocking walkways*
- *slippery floor surfaces from spilled substances such as fluid, mud or oil*
- *type of flooring or surface texture like wood, concrete or vinyl*
- *stairs or steps – carrying things that obscure the view of the floor*
- *inadequate lighting*
- *inadequate footwear*
- *improper use of ladders*
- *exposure to chemicals that make you lose your balance*
- *being hit by a moving object.*

READ OUT

A risk assessment should be undertaken to determine the level of risk and appropriate controls. This gives us the opportunity to discuss issues and negotiate suitable arrangements for reducing slips, trips and falls.

Consultation between PCBUs, workers, health and safety representatives and committees is an important part of the risk management process. It helps to identify hazards before any injury, illness or incident occurs, and then to develop measures to eliminate or reduce the associated risks.

As workers, we have a responsibility to protect our own health and safety and that of others affected by our work, and to abide by procedures and policies in relation to workplace safety. We should all be provided with appropriate information and training to allow us to fulfil that obligation.

ASK THE QUESTION

So what's going to prevent us slipping, tripping or falling at work?

Possible answers:

- *good house-keeping protocols, including rubbish removal*
- *storing equipment correctly*
- *using ladders and steps correctly*
- *reporting damage to floors and surfaces*
- *clearly marking walkways*
- *staying on marked walkways*
- *implementing a clean and clear walkway policy*
- *attaching mats to the floor surface*
- *restricting access to areas that are potentially hazardous*
- *providing ramps instead of steps where the height of floor levels change*
- *restricting tasks to suitably trained workers*
- *providing adequate aisle width*
- *providing adequate lighting*
- *using warning signs.*

READ OUT

It's the little things that could cause a slip, trip or fall, so we all need to work together to prevent it happening.

ASK THE QUESTION

Before I finish, are you aware of any hazards or risks that need to be reviews in our workplace?

Take notes about suggestions ... don't panic if there aren't any takers!

READ OUT

OK, unless anyone has any questions, thanks for participating.