

TOOLBOX TALK

# Slips, trips and falls toolbox talk

About six minutes · Workplace Regulations 1992, CDM 2015

SITE

DATE

GIVEN BY

WHY IT MATTERS

Slips, trips and falls on the same level made up 30% of the injuries to employees that employers reported to HSE in 2024/25, more than any other kind of accident. In construction, HSE says several thousand workers are hurt this way every year, and around a thousand of those are broken bones or dislocations. A broken wrist is weeks off the tools. A broken hip can be the end of a career.

Nobody plans to trip. The cable was only across the door for a minute, the offcuts were going in the skip at break, the mud was the same as yesterday. This talk is about making sure the thing that catches a foot is not there when the foot arrives.

HSE, Non-fatal injuries at work in Great Britain (kinds of accident, employer-reported, 2024/25)

THE POINTS TO MAKE

- ☐ **Walkways are the first control**  
Every site needs marked routes from the gate to the work, kept clear, firm underfoot and lit. If a route is blocked, the answer is to clear it or set up another one, not to pick your way over the pile. Know where the walkways are on this site today, and use them.
- ☐ **Cables and hoses go up, not across**  
A trailing lead across a corridor or a doorway is a trip waiting for the next person through. Run cables and hoses at high level, especially along corridors, or use cordless tools where you can. Where a cable has to cross a route, it is covered or ramped and the crossing is visible.
- ☐ **Uneven ground and changes of level**  
Kerbs, trenches, backfill, a step down into a plant room, a lip at a doorway. Where the level changes on a route, it is ramped if possible and signed if not. Stairs need a handrail and a nosing you can see. Carry loads so you can see your feet, or get a second person or a barrow.
- ☐ **Footwear and how you move**  
Site boots with a sound tread are part of the control, and they only work if the tread is not worn flat or packed with mud. Rushing, carrying something that blocks your view, and walking while looking at a phone all add to the risk. Look where you are going, and slow down on wet ground and stairs.
- ☐ **Most trips are something left out**  
HSE says most trips are caused by obstructions in walkways. Offcuts, packaging, tools, a hose, a stack of boards put down for a minute. The rule is simple: if you put it down on a route, you pick it up. Waste goes to the skip or the waste point, not to the edge of the walkway.
- ☐ **Mud, water, dust and spills**  
Slips come from what is on the floor. Mud at the entrance gets stone. Ice gets grit. A wet floor gets dried or signed and kept clear until it is. A spill of oil, paint or plaster slurry is cleaned up by whoever finds it, straight away. Fine dust on a smooth floor is as slippery as water.
- ☐ **Light to see your feet**  
Many slips and trips happen because the hazard was there and nobody could see it. Stairwells, basements, corridors before the power is on, and the yard at the start and end of the day all need working lighting. A failed light on a route is reported today, not when somebody falls.

DO

- Use the marked walkways and keep them clear, firm and lit.
- Clear up any spill, offcut or obstruction you find, or make it safe and report it.
- Run cables and hoses at high level, or cover and ramp them where they cross a route.
- Put stone on mud and grit on ice before people start walking on it.
- Report failed lights, broken handrails and damaged flooring the day you see them.
- Check your boots: sound tread, laces done up, mud knocked off before stairs and ladders.

DO NOT

- Do not leave a cable or hose across a corridor, doorway or stair, even for a minute.
- Do not stack materials or waste on a walkway or against a stair.
- Do not step over a hazard and leave it for the next person.
- Do not carry a load that stops you seeing your feet or the step in front of you.
- Do not walk a route in the dark because the lights are not on yet.
- Do not walk and use your phone at the same time on site.

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TOOLBOX TALK, CONTINUED

# Slips, trips and falls toolbox talk: the questions, and the close

ASK THE TEAM

- ? Where are the marked walkways on this site today, and is any of them blocked right now?
- ? Which cables or hoses on this job cross a route, and how are they covered?
- ? Where does mud, water or dust build up here, and who is sorting it this morning?
- ? Which stairs, corridors or rooms have no working light yet?
- ? When did somebody last nearly go over on this site, and what changed afterwards?

TO CLOSE

Nobody trips on purpose. People trip because the lead was across the door, the offcuts were going at break, the light had gone and the mud was the same as yesterday. Most of what causes a slip or a trip can be seen and sorted in under a minute by the person who finds it. See it, sort it. If you cannot sort it, tell me and we will.

**Record it.** Who gave the talk, where, when, who was there and what was raised. The last page is the record.

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ATTENDANCE RECORD

Slips, trips and falls toolbox talk: given and understood

Each person signs on the day to say they were present and understood the talk. Anyone who joins the team later is given the talk before starting, and signs here.

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| QUESTIONS RAISED, AND THE ANSWERS GIVEN | ACTIONS AGREED, WHO AND BY WHEN |      |
| <div></div>                             | <div></div>                     |      |
| TALK GIVEN BY (SIGNATURE)               | POSITION                        | DATE |
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MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK REGULATIONS 1999, REGULATION 10: INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES