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SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS PROCEDURE

The Procedure outlines the potential risks of slips, trips and falls for employees, service users etc., on Public Health Wales premises. It looks at risk assessment and the responsibilities of employees within the organisation.

This Procedure outlines the organisation's requirement to assess the risks associated with slips, trips and falls and to make provision for suitable controls designed to remove or reduce the risk of harm occurring.

Supporting Procedures and Written Control Documents

This Procedure supports the Health and Safety Policy, Adverse Weather Conditions/Transport Distribution Policy, Infection Control Policy, Lone Working Procedure.

Scope

This procedure and any arrangements made under it applies to:

All persons employed or engaged by Public Health Wales, including hosted bodies, part time workers, temporary and agency workers, those holding honorary contracts.

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Disclaimer

If the review date of this document has passed please ensure that the version you are using is the most up to date either by contacting the document author or the [Corporate Governance](#).

Summary of reviews/amendments

Version Number	Date of Review Approved	Date Published	Summary of Amendments

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1 Introduction

The Organisation has statutory obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc., Act 1974 to ensure a safe working environment. The Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations, require any floor surface to be suitable for its purpose and kept free from hazards or obstructions, which may cause a person to slip, trip and fall.

This Procedure applies to all employees (permanent, temporary, agency or locum) visitors and any others who enter the organisation, in clinical and non-clinical environments and applies to all premises under the control of the organisation.

The organisation is committed to preventing or minimising the risk of slips, trips and falls to anyone who visits or uses our premises. It aims to do this by;

- providing a safe working environment which, as far as is reasonably practicable, is free from hazards that contribute to falls;
- ensuring any slip and trip hazards in the workplace are identified, reported and rectified;
- ensuring, where deficiencies are identified, appropriate risk assessments and risk reduction action plans are in place to reduce falls and ensure the best practice principles are applied.

The main causes of slip, trips and falls as reported on the Health and Safety Executive website are due to obstruction in walkways and uneven surfaces.

Slips, trips and falls are usually in the top five of non-patient incidents. Approximately 15-20% of slip, trip and fall incidents are RIDDOR reportable. Of all the Reportable Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences (RIDDOR) incidents 25% are due to slips, trips or falls and they account for the majority of the major injuries reported.

This Procedure outlines the Organisation's requirement to assess the risks associated with slips, trips and falls and to make provision for suitable controls designed to remove or reduce the risk of harm occurring.

2 Procedure aim

The aim of this procedure is to set out the measures required to ensure that the risks of slips, trips and falls in the workplace are identified and that appropriate control measures are in place to reduce the risk of incidents occurring.

3 Objectives

The main objective of this procedure is to reduce preventable workplace slips, trips and falls incidents through appropriate risk assessment, effective planning and positive management.

4 Roles and Responsibilities

All staff within Public Health Wales have a legal duty to comply with both Welsh and UK Government legislation, which this procedural document sets out.

5 Training requirements

Specific training is provided to staff where necessary e.g., Clinical Services Estates/Facilities and records of their training must be kept.

6 Risk Assessment

In line with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations, the organisation is required to assess the workplace for slip, trip and fall hazards and outline the control measures in place to ensure the risks of injury are removed or kept as low as possible.

Risk assessment is about taking sensible measures to control slip, trip and fall risks e.g. by using doormats to prevent water being walked in from outside.

Consider what risks may lead to slip or trip injuries, and decide what suitable and effective control measures will prevent these types of incidents and put them into practice. Concentrate on the real risks – those that are most likely to cause harm. Consider how incidents could happen and who might be harmed.

Before tackling slips and trips it is important to understand the factors that can cause them. Think about people and organisational factors and consider how work is organised and managed.

Any risks identified should be reported to respective Line Manger to inform the Estates/Facilities Department as soon as possible.

Significant risks must be recorded onto the risk assessment module on Datix to ensure they are reflected in the risk register.

7 Record Keeping

It is important to keep records of cleaning schedules and inspections and ensure they are available. Check to ensure working practices and processes are being carried out properly, e.g. smooth floors are not left wet. Records should be kept in relation to:

- Cleaning and inspection, who carried out the activity and when;
- Gritting including who carried out the activity, where and when.

8 Monitoring compliance

The effectiveness of the Procedure will be monitored via the analysis of slip, trip and fall incidents, RIDDOR reported incidents, complaints and corporate claims.

This Protocol will be subject to review in line with health and safety legislation or if there are changes to technology, processes or practice. This will also be based on the prioritisation of risk within the organisation and as a consequence of any serious incidents

9 Following a Slip, Trip or Fall

Following a slip, trip or fall if the person has been injured an Incident Report Form will need to be completed on Datix as soon as possible after the incident.

If an incident is RIDDOR reportable, the Health and Safety Manager must be contacted as soon as possible. Any actions identified by the investigation will need to be completed to prevent re-occurrence.

Any accidents or near misses are to be reported promptly so that the information can be used, actions put in place to prevent future accidents.

10 Non-Compliance

It is important that employees ensure both the health and safety of themselves and others by following the guidance in this Procedure. Failure to comply with the agreed Procedure may lead to disciplinary action.

Definitions

Slip: To slide accidentally causing the person to lose their balance. This either is corrected or causes a person to fall.

Trip: People trip when they catch their foot on something or stumble accidentally over an obstacle or change in surface level, causing the person to lose their balance. This either is corrected or causes a person to fall.

Fall: An event, which results in the person coming to rest on the ground or another surface lower than the person, whether or not an injury is sustained.

Causes and Prevention of Slips and Trips

Slips rarely happen on clean, dry floors. Floors are usually only slippery when they are contaminated with liquid, bodily fluids, oil, dust, powder etc. It is therefore important to eliminate the risk in the first place, if this is not possible prevent contamination from becoming deposited on surfaces, if this is not possible limit the effects of contamination.

Causes of Slips	Prevention, actions or control
Environmental Factors	
<p>Slippery or wet surfaces due to contamination of the floor from;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spillages of solids or liquids • wet cleaning methods • dry contamination, e.g. dusts, powders, polythene bags left on floors, product spillages or cardboard laid over spills • condensation, e.g. from poor ventilation • natural contamination such as wet, and/or mud in outside areas • wind-driven rain, sleet and snow through doorways 	<p>Maintaining equipment to prevent leakage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • installing suitable entrance matting systems • putting up effective entrance canopies <p>Limit the effects of contamination by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cleaning up spillages immediately, leaving the floor dry where possible • prompt repair of leaks • limiting the area of contamination • restricting access to contaminated areas • using dry methods for cleaning floors • clean and dry incoming footwear, by use of suitable entrance matting • using warning signs to identify contaminated floors or floors after cleaning
Steps / Stairs	<p>Ensure that consideration is given to individuals with sensory impairment to ensure;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • steps or stairs have adequate foot and handholds with good handrails, clearly visible

	<p>nosings, and suitable balustrades</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any applied slip-resistant nosing does not create a tripping or heel-catch hazard • any changes in level are highlighted, particularly at single steps • lighting is adequate so changes can be easily identified • signage is accessible to highlight any changes in the environment (e.g. wet floor, damaged step).
<p>Changes in floor levels such as unmarked ramps or slopes</p>	<p>Try to avoid sudden changes of level. If this is not possible ensure that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changes in level are highlighted, particularly at the top and bottom of ramps • sudden changes in levels are removed if possible or ensure that there are good visual signs for changes in floor level and surface • improve lighting and visibility • hand rails are provided where applicable • floor markings are used • slopes are gradual • signage is accessible to highlight any changes in the environment (e.g. wet floor, slopes, step etc.). <p>Where required, the organisation will seek advice from relevant organisations on sensory impairment.</p>
<p>Uneven / damaged surfaces e.g.</p>	<p>Eliminate holes or uneven</p>

<p>holes</p>	<p>surfaces which could cause trips. Inspect and maintain floors so they have a consistent surface finish with no holes to cause a tripping hazard</p> <p>Ensure;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lighting levels and placement of light fittings are sufficient to ensure more even lighting of all floor areas and allow for obstructions to be seen • environmental demands do not distract attention from the floor condition • smoke or steam are eliminated or controlled by redirecting away from risk areas, improve ventilation and warn of it
<p>Adverse environmental conditions hiding the condition of the floor and distracting attention;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low light levels or glare • shadows • the use of repeating patterns on floor coverings that might be distracting to the eye, for example, by disguising a change in level • smoke, steam obscuring view 	<p>Ensure;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lighting levels and placement of light fittings are sufficient to ensure more even lighting of all floor areas and permit obstructions to be seen • environmental demands do not distract attention from the floor condition • smoke or steam are eliminated or controlled by redirecting away from risk areas, improve ventilation and warn of it
<p>Individual Factors</p>	
<p>Unsafe actions by individuals, due to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rushing • carrying items which prevent a hazard being seen on the floor - if 	<p>Supervise and monitor physical controls to see safe practices are followed</p> <p>Managers may need to take into consideration;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor eyesight

<p>balance is adversely impacted individuals are more likely to fall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being distracted by talking to others or on the phone so that the individual fails to note flooring condition and or environmental conditions • carelessness • poor knowledge of risks and measures • poor health and safety information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fatigue • physical frailty or disability • sensory impairment
<p>The nature of the task being carried out such as;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the need to carry, lift, push, lower or pull loads • the need to turn, to move quickly or to take long strides • distractions • having no hands free to hold on to handrails to stop a fall • restricted vision or sensory impairment • the nature of the task creating obstructions • a safety culture which is not supportive, i.e. where risks are accepted as part of the job 	<p>Analyse the tasks and process flows in any slip or trip risk area - tasks should not compromise the ability to work safely;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • see if work can be handled to eliminate or minimise obstructions • establish a positive attitude that trips can be prevented • review the way that staff work and the areas in which they operate – are floors tidy, is there adequate storage space?
<p>Footwear</p>	
<p>Footwear can cause a slip or trip hazard due to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sole material and pattern • size of heel • type of shoe • fit • contamination of shoes (dust, liquid, ice) 	<p>Appropriate footwear should be worn for the work environment and as per the uniform policies or personal protective equipment requirements (where applicable).</p>
<p>Obstructions</p>	
<p>Temporary or permanent, e.g.</p>	<p>Eliminate materials likely to</p>

<p>accumulation of articles such as trolleys, wheelchairs, medical equipment, waste</p>	<p>obstruct walkways and therefore lead to trips. For example analyse work flows and design processes so waste and equipment does not accumulate on walkways. Where possible;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide sufficient and suitable storage • mark out walkways, working areas and make sure they are kept free of obstructions • ensure there are suitable and clear walkways through the workplace • keep walkways clutter free • consideration is given to sensory impairment
<p>Trailing cables</p>	<p>Position equipment to avoid cables crossing pedestrian routes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use cable covers to securely fix to surfaces • restrict access to prevent contact • consider use of cordless tools and equipment • remember that contractors also need to be managed
<p>Miscellaneous rubbish</p>	<p>Keep areas clear, remove rubbish and do not allow to accumulate.</p>
<p>Rugs or mats</p>	<p>Ensure that mats are securely fixed and ensure edges and corners are not curling.</p>

Footwear can play an important part in preventing slips or trips. Where floors cannot be kept clean and dry, slip-resistant footwear can help prevent slip accidents. Employees must wear footwear, which is appropriate to the environment in which they work.

The All Wales NHS Dress Code states that footwear worn in the clinical areas should be suitable for purpose and comply with the relevant health and safety requirements, for example, soft soled for reduced noise, low heeled for manual handling and ease of movement, and closed toes for protection against spills.