Safety Share

Slips, trips and falls

Government of South Australia
Department for Infrastructure and Transport

There has been a recent increase in the numbers of slip, trip and fall incidents occurring on Department for Infrastructure and Transport construction projects. While these events often result in minor injury, they remain one of the most common causes of workplace injuries. The table below lists some of the practical control measures to eliminate or minimise the risks of slips, trips and falls.

Control area	Practical control measure
Access and movement	• install level, unobstructed, slip-resistant surfaces • ensure ramps and stairs meet relevant standards • ensure appropriate lighting and avoid abrupt lighting changes • communicate temporary hazards clearly
Workplace layout	• reduce double handling and unnecessary movement • separate pedestrian and vehicle routes • provide clear signage for accessways and storage
Weather and environmental	• use canopies and drainage to reduce contamination risk • plan for storms, rain, condensation and debris • provide temporary safe pathways during adverse conditions • coordinate weather-affected work with other duty holders
Distraction management	• reduce noise and visual distractions (e.g. flickering lights) • design workflows that prevent congestion in high-risk areas • manage fatigue and time pressures by reviewing schedules and workload
Work demands	• provide adequate time for tasks • engage workers in assessing workload suitability
Maintenance and cleaning	• ensure repairs to flooring, leaks and lighting are prompt • schedule cleaning during low-traffic times • provide spill kits, appropriate cleaning products and clear procedures • keep walkways and storage areas uncluttered • conduct regular inspections and encourage hazard reporting
Load handling	• use mechanical aids to reduce physical strain and manual handling • ensure mechanical aids are appropriate for surface conditions • avoid workers moving loads over uneven, wet or sloped surfaces
Scheduling	• coordinate deliveries and operational tasks to avoid congestion • provide alternate safe routes during temporary obstructions • prepare contingency plans for delays and weather impacts

References:

- Guide to managing the risks of slips, trips and falls (Safe Work Australia)