

SLIPS TRIPS AND FALLS STANDARD

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1.0 SCOPE

This standard applies to same elevation slip, trip and fall hazards. The scope of this standard does not include working at heights.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

Slip

A slide causing an individual to lose their balance. This can either be corrected or cause the individual to fall. Slips happen when there is too little friction or traction between the footwear and the walking surface. Common causes of slips are:

- Wet or oily surfaces caused by occasional spills
- Weather hazards
- Loose, unanchored rugs or mats
- Flooring or other walking surfaces that do not have the same degree of traction in all areas

Trip

A stumble, often over an obstacle, causing an individual to lose their balance. This can either be corrected or cause the individual to fall. Trips happen when the foot strikes or hits an object. Common causes of tripping are:

- Obstructed view
- Poor lighting
- Clutter in the path of travel
- Wrinkled carpeting
- Uncovered cables
- Bottom drawers not being closed
- Uneven walking surfaces

Fall

An event that results in an individual or a body part coming into contact with the ground or other surface that is lower than the individual. Falls can occur at the same level (e.g., to the floor or ground on which the person was previously standing) or to a lower level (e.g., down a flight of stairs or through an opening). Falls often, although not always, result from slips or trips.

3.0 PREVENTING SLIP TRIP AND FALL INJURIES

The following provides slips, trips and falls injury prevention strategies and can be used to increase awareness for all staff.

3.1 COMMON HAZARDS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

- Unsuitable footwear
- Slippery surfaces (oily or greasy, etc.)
- Seasonal slip, trip and fall hazards (snow and ice)

- Spills of wet or dry substances
- Changes in walkway levels and slopes
- Unsecured mats
- Unsafe use of ladders
- Poor lighting
- Debris and cables in walkways
- Lack of guardrails on mezzanines and balconies
- Poorly maintained equipment

3.2 WINTER SAFETY TIPS

- Review UW [Seasonal Weather Information](#). Avoid cutting through areas not designated or intended as walkways.
- Walk slowly and carefully on icy or snowy walkways. Take short, deliberate steps in which the mid-foot strikes the ground first, not the heel. The body should always be centered over the feet. This avoids slips at the heel strike phase of gait, the most common slip occurrence. Slowing the walking pace further reduces the likelihood of slipping.
- Avoid areas with poor lighting, when possible.
- Change direction carefully when walking on slippery surfaces.
- Avoid icy areas of walkways when there is an alternate route
- Be aware that black ice can look like wet pavement.
- Be especially cautious when new snow may have hidden icy patches beneath it.
- Ensure footwear has a good tread and is appropriate for cold or wet weather.
- Be aware that walkways or stairs at any premises could be slippery.
- Avoid walking with your hands in your pockets; keep hands free for balance.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of materials where possible.
- Carry items in a way that will not throw you off balance or obstruct vision; it is important to see where you are walking.
- Use handrails on stairs, so you can catch yourself if you slip on icy steps.
- Place your full attention on walking; digging in your pocketbook or backpack or using cell phones or other devices while walking is dangerous.
- Be aware of changes in friction on walking surfaces (e.g., walking from snow to ice, from curb to road, or from inside to outside).
- Test potentially slick areas by tapping your foot on them.
- Be particularly careful of slippery conditions in the morning when melt water from the previous day may be frozen.

- Avoid climbing over snowbanks and look for an alternate route.
- When entering buildings, be aware that immediate entrances and stairs may be slippery from melted ice or snow. When you see such a hazard, bring it to the attention of the person in charge.
- Remove the snow from the soles of your footwear as you enter a building or vehicle.
- Bring to the attention of your manager or supervisor any UW walkways or entrances that are slippery or in poor conditions.
- Report any concerns, hazards, or slip, trip or fall incidents to your supervisor.

3.3 SAFELY ENTERING AND EXITING VEHICLES

- Always inspect your vehicle and the area surrounding your vehicle before entering or exiting the vehicle. Survey the environment for items such as ice, snow, grease, oil, debris, rocks, potholes, uneven surfaces.
- Survey the vehicle for cracks or excessive wear to the access points such as steps, handholds, etc. When possible, remove ice, snow, or other debris from steps, handholds and footwear before entering or exiting.
- Ensure vehicle clutter is removed and equipment secured to avoid trip hazards when entering or exiting.
- Whenever possible, park the vehicle in an area free of the above hazards.
- When climbing in or out of a vehicle, face the vehicle where practicable and always use the three-point contact rule. Keep three points in contact with the vehicle, either one hand and two feet, or two hands and one foot. Use the vehicle door for support to provide stability.
- Step with caution (on the mid-foot) in icy conditions.
- Report any vehicle or related hazards to your supervisor when unable to resolve yourself.

3.4 FACILITY MANAGEMENT AND DESIGN

- Match floor cleaning and maintenance procedures with manufacturer's instructions or accepted industry practices for the type of floor surface.
- Follow appropriate procedures to minimize risks from wet cleaning.
- Maintain indoor and outdoor surfaces free of hazards or obstructions, or clearly identify the presence of hazards or obstructions if elimination is not possible or feasible, by using barriers or signage.
- In consultation with users and those who are responsible for ongoing maintenance:

- Ensure that facilities are designed with appropriate flooring for the type of work operation or activity to be conducted within the facility.
- Ensure that other aspects of the facilities are designed to minimize or eliminate the risk of slips, trips and falls. Consider placement of canopies over external doorways to prevent the collection of water at building entrances and install appropriate lighting.
- Ensure that prompt action is taken to address any potential or identified hazards that may contribute to the occurrence of slips, trips and falls (e.g., repair any damaged or broken surfaces, clean up spills, and mitigate snow or ice on surfaces).

4.0 CONTROL MEASURES

Consider the following hierarchy of controls for implementing corrective actions to slip, trip and fall hazards. Establish safe work practices by considering the characteristics of the physical work area and tasks performed by the worker.

4.1 ELIMINATION/SUBSTITUTION

- Clean up spills promptly.
- Remove debris, snow and ice.
- Remove clutter from walking surfaces.
- Clean grease build-up from slip-resistant mats.
- Remove debris and cables in walkways.

4.2 ENGINEERING CONTROLS

- Install slip-resistant flooring and slip-resistant mats.
- Reroute or install bridges over cables on floors, which can be trip hazards.
- Ensure appropriate slope on ramps.
- Ensure adequate handrails are installed.
- Maintain surface free of obstructions/holes.
- Ensure appropriate drainage.
- Minimize glare and contrast with adequate lighting.
- Minimize environmental influences (e.g., blocking wind, preventing wet surfaces from icing).
- Ensure guardrails are in place for raised floors, mezzanines and balconies.
- Ensure sound footing for ladders and work platforms.
- Install covers on holes in the floor.

4.3 ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS

- Provide wet floor signage.
- Train workers to prevent slips, trips and falls.
- Establish safe work practices.
- Communicate the procedure for reporting hazards.
- Ensure prompt maintenance.
- Design jobs to minimize tasks requiring excessive pushing/pulling, line-of-sight obstruction and over-reaching.
- Ensure shovels, mops and buckets are readily available.
- Correct poor work practices.
- Conduct monthly inspections.
- Review slips, trips and same-level fall incidents to identify preventive actions.
- Routinely clean floors with appropriate solutions.

4.4 PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- Select appropriate footwear based on a risk assessment of the job task.
- Wear proper-fitting footwear that may include slip-resistant soles.

5.0 MONITORING

The Safety Office will monitor trends of slip, trip and fall incidents and may initiate further investigation where:

- A pattern of incidents is identified.
- Lost time from work or medical aid has occurred.

Any situation is deemed to require further investigation.

6.0 RECORD OF REVISIONS

Date	Author/Editor	Changes	Version
September 2024	Elizabeth Ney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program renamed to Slips Trips and Falls Standard. • Removed Sections: 1.0 Purpose, 4.0 Roles and Responsibilities. • Moved Facility Management & Design to Prevention section. • Modified Scope section and retained wording to reflect that this standard applies only to same level slips trips and falls. • Added a link to UW Seasonal Weather Information in the Winter Safety Tips section. • Removed point: "Use two hands to climb\descend ladders and maintain three-point contact while working on ladders." This is not an administrative control of same elevation slip, trip and fall prevention. 	Slips Trips and Falls Standard v.1.0 SEPT2024
November 2021	Elizabeth Ney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated section 3.0 Definitions 	Slips Trips and Falls Program v.1.1 NOV2021
November 2020	Elizabeth Ney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated section 3.0 Definitions • Updated section 4.1 Department Head/Chair/Director Roles and Responsibilities 	Slips Trips and Falls Program v.1.1 NOV2020
November 2019	Elizabeth Ney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added section 8.0 Record of Revisions 	Slips Trips and Falls Program v.1.0 NOV2019
November 2018	Elizabeth Ney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No changes 	Slips Trips and Falls Program v.1.0 NOV2018