



Housekeeping Practices, Facility Inspections and Preventive Maintenance Programs

Slip, trip and fall accidents are a leading cause of injury across many industry segments including manufacturing, health care, trucking and general office environments. Good housekeeping practices, routine facility inspections and preventive maintenance programs are all effective ways of preventing these injuries and lowering the cost of workers' compensation insurance.

Key Players

Facility, janitorial and maintenance staff play a key role in keeping parking lots, sidewalks and interior walking surfaces clean and well-maintained. Management plays an important role in this process by meeting with these employees and reviewing current work practices and procedures. Discuss where potential slip and fall exposures are present in your workplace and how facility inspections, preventive maintenance programs and housekeeping practices can be fine tuned to focus on potential exposures.

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Housekeeping and Preventive Maintenance Software Application Resources:

- EscSoftwareTools.com
- SMGlobal.com
- eMaint.com

Outdoors

Inspections should be in place to identify and make necessary repairs to prevent slip and fall injuries.

- Parking lots, sidewalks and outdoor steps should be inspected regularly for hazards.
- Environmental factors can be harsh on blacktop and concrete surfaces, so ongoing inspections need to be performed to identify potholes and cracks that may have formed.
- Temporary barricades and safety cones should be on hand to mark these areas until appropriate repairs can be made.
- Preventive maintenance programs and safety inspection checklists should include areas with a known history of slip and fall incidents.
- Lighting systems covering the parking lot and sidewalks should be checked early in the morning or evening to verify they are working properly and to identify any electrical ballast systems that need repair. Deficient lighting makes it more difficult for employees to choose a safe path of travel and see hazards in their way.
- Audits should include an examination of curbs, entrance steps and handrails for damage.
- Entrance steps and handrails need to be inspected for damage.

Inside

Once inside a building, there can be a false sense of security that the potential for slip and falls has passed. Interior walking surfaces, such as entrances, foyers, reception areas, hallways, and stairwells, are all areas where serious slip and fall injuries occur, and special attention should be paid to housekeeping in these areas.

- The occurrence of these injuries mainly takes place during the winter when employees and visitors inadvertently track snow, ice and water throughout hallways, stairwells, break rooms, restrooms and other interior areas.
- Heavy foot traffic causes entrance mats to roll up and become a major trip hazard.
- Floor mats also become saturated with snow and water and may require replacement during the day. Extra mats should be kept on hand and changed out as needed.

Housekeeping staff should develop a schedule to monitor specific areas of a facility where moisture may collect as employees and visitors enter throughout the day. Facility and janitorial staff will need to stay vigilant in their inspections of stairwells, landings, break rooms, restrooms and hallways as well.

