

Slip and fall accidents are the second leading cause of death in the United States, exceeded only by motor vehicle accidents. More than 13,000 persons die from falls every year¹. According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, in 2008, there were almost 235,000 workplace injuries due to falls.

The best method to reduce slips and falls isn't just having a specific or distinct slip and fall program. Rather, a much more effective approach is to integrate the key elements of such a program into your existing company's functions and procedures². By doing so, your management team and employees will envision their role in reducing your slip and fall exposures as part of their normal job duties.

Identifying functions and procedures that need to be developed or enhanced to reduce your slip and fall exposures is vital toward your company's success in reducing your slip and fall accidents.

Key elements

Identifying the key elements of a slip and fall prevention program is required to ensure they're being properly addressed at your company. Key elements are:

1. Identification of loss areas:
 - a. Causes of loss
 - b. Locations (e.g., inside, outside, ladders, stairs, etc.)
2. Identification of exposures:
 - a. Lighting
 - b. Entrances
 - c. Mats and runners
 - d. Stairs
 - e. Ramps
 - f. Restrooms, kitchens, cafeteria, etc.
 - g. Housekeeping
 - h. Congestion or high-traffic areas
 - i. General floor conditions
 - j. Parking lot conditions
 - k. Climate/weather
3. Review of existing policies and procedures:
 - a. Are they addressing your exposures?
 - b. Are they effective?
 - c. Have goals been identified and communicated?
4. Roles and responsibilities:
 - a. Inspections
 - I. Who's responsible?
 - II. Are past known causes of loss and present exposures inspected?
 - III. Are both outdoor and indoor exposures included?
 - IV. Is the frequency adequate?
 - V. Are findings reported to the right person(s)?



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Helping Industries Prevent Slips, Trips, and Falls

- b. Contractors
 - I. Are expectations in writing and clearly understood?
 - II. Is it known who can contact them and when?
 - III. Are certificates of insurance requested and received?
- c. Spill/Wet program
 - I. Who's responsible?
 - II. How are they notified?
 - III. Do they have the right equipment?
 - IV. Is equipment easily accessible?
- d. Snow and ice removal program
 - I. Are you primarily using contractors? If so, see section b.
 - II. Have you assigned persons responsible?
 - III. Do responsible persons clearly understand the expectations?
 - IV. Do they have the appropriate equipment?
 - V. Is it completed timely?
 - VI. Are barriers set up around unsafe areas?
 - VII. Do responsible parties coordinate plowing and parking?
 - VIII. Do responsible parties provide designated paths in the parking lots?
- e. Personal protective equipment (PPE) Requirements (slip-resistant footwear)
 - I. Are they effective in reducing falls?
 - II. Are they properly enforced?
- f. Accident reporting and investigation
 - I. Who's responsible?
 - II. Are root causes identified?
 - III. Are appropriate actions taken to prevent re-occurrence?
 - IV. Are reports sent to senior management or the safety committee for review?
- g. Training
 - I. New hires
 - II. Existing employees
 - III. Following an incident
 - IV. Re-enforcement purposes
 - V. Training may include:
 - i. How to report a hazard
 - ii. PPE requirements
 - iii. Behavior expectations (e.g., no running, jumping, carrying objects, etc.)
 - iv. Specific job tasks
 - v. Specific hazards (e.g., ladders, stairs, parking lots, etc.)
- h. Re-assessment of program elements
 - I. How often?
 - II. Have goals been established?
 - III. Have goals been met?
 - IV. Are the elements effective?
 - V. Is slip/fall prevention part of your overall safety culture?
 - VI. Are additional elements warranted?

¹ Hazard Abatement. <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>

² If You Want to Reduce Slips and Falls...Forget the Program. Di Pilla, Steve.
http://foodmanagement.com/business_topics/food_safety/fm_imp_13389/