

Over the past five years, more than 2,700 workers in the Public Education sector have been injured by slips, trips, and falls. These incidents don't just cause sprains, bruises, or fractures—they can lead to lasting pain, stress, and even changes in employment. The impact is felt not only by the injured worker, but also by their families and co-workers. As employers, we have a responsibility to make prevention a priority, so that every worker can go home safe and healthy at the end of the day

The Impact

For public education, injuries from slips, trips, and falls can be financially damaging. In the past five years, these injuries cost public education more than **94,500 lost workdays** and **more than \$35 million in workers' compensation payments**. Direct costs can include claim payments, increased insurance premiums, and fines. Indirect costs may include incident investigations, the hiring and training of temporary employees, and production or service interruptions, ultimately leading to loss of business.

Across all industries, slips, trips, and falls are the costliest workplace incidents and some of the biggest causes of general productivity loss. Of all workplace injury claims in B.C., 20% of them are related to slips, trips, and falls, with public education at 18.6% for the past five years.

Although they occur frequently and can be costly, slips, trips, and falls are some of the most preventable types of workplace incidents. Effectively managing the risk of slips, trips, and falls in the workplace involves three steps:

1. **Identify the hazards** - through inspections, mapping, reviewing incident reports, and worker input.
2. **Assess the risks** – rank hazards by their likelihood and severity based on incident trends.
3. **Implement effective controls** - prioritizing elimination, substitution, engineering, administrative, then PPE (in line with the hierarchy of controls).

Employer Responsibilities

In order for slip and trip prevention efforts to achieve sustainable results, these efforts require a clear framework that embeds prevention into daily activities and processes and includes:

- Management commitment
- Worker involvement
- Training and education

Management commitment should be the starting point for all injury-prevention plans in a workplace, including those for slips and trips.

The following have page references to [Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls in the Workplace | WorkSafeBC](#)

Commitment

Employers, managers, and supervisors should take an active role in identifying and fixing slip and trip hazards. A key part of this involves committing human and financial resources

to control hazards at the source. If it's not possible to address all issues at once, develop a plan to prioritize and solve them over time. (See "Assessing risks: Know which hazards to address first" on page 12.)

It's also crucial that management and supervisors set good examples. For example, a supervisor who is seen holding a handrail while using stairs sends a positive message to the whole organization.

Here are some other actions that employers can take:

- Engage the joint health and safety committee and other managers and supervisors. You may need to convince these groups that slips and trips are serious, and their support is vital.
- Oversee the implementation of workplace practices and standards such as housekeeping and footwear. (See pages 41 and 50.)
- Expect accountability and troubleshoot with workers when required (with an emphasis on understanding rather than enforcement).
- When a slip or trip incident occurs, don't assume the worker is at fault. Instead, analyze all the factors that influence the potential for slips and trips, including lighting (environment), layout (workplace design), contaminants, and housekeeping. (See page 6.)
- Be a role model. Pick up trash from the floor, wear appropriate footwear, use handrails, and give positive feedback to workers who follow safe work practices. When necessary, reinforce expectations around safe work practices. (See page 56.)

Training

Training gives managers and supervisors a greater understanding of their roll in prevention and how their actions matter. Review the sections of the OHS program that apply to slips and trips, and cover the following topics:

In the OHS Regulation

- Sections 4.39–4.41 refer to slipping and tripping hazards. [WorkSafeBC](#) section 4
- Sections 8.22–8.23 refer to footwear [WorkSafeBC](#) section 8
- Sections 13.4–13.6 refer to ladder use. [WorkSafeBC](#) section 13
- What slips and trips are, and their causes (*see below*) and consequences. (Provide statistics and explain how injuries can affect workers personally and professionally.)

Slips happen when there's not enough grip or traction between a person's bare foot or footwear and the walking surface. Trips happen when people lose their balance after their feet collide with objects or they miss a step when going up or down stairs. Falls often result from slips or trips.

Slips, trips, and falls in workplaces result from a combination of factors, including workplace design, flooring, contamination, cleaning and housekeeping practices, the environment, footwear, work procedures and practices, and human performance factors. Understanding how these factors combine and potentially contribute to slips, trips, and falls is key to effectively managing the risk.

- The most common slip and trip hazards at the workplace. (Include specific examples.)

- How to report a slip or trip. (See page 59.)
- How to report a spill. (See page 67.)
- How to use a spill response kit. (See page 67.)
- Expected workplace practices. (See page 67.)
- Footwear requirements or policy. (See page 66.)
- Housekeeping standards and expectations. (See page 41.)
- Winter weather plan. (See page 47.)
- How to role model safe work practices. (See page 56.)
- How to give feedback on work practices. (See page 56.)
- How to identify barriers to safe work practices. (See page 56.)
- How to investigate a slip or trip incident. (See page 59.)

Plan to do an initial training session followed by annual refresher training.

Get Workers on Board

Efforts to identify hazards and assess and control risks are more likely to be successful when workers are actively involved. Staff engaged in front-line work are well positioned to point out slip and trip hazards and quickly deal with minor ones.

Involvement

Some ways to engage workers in the process include the following:

- Educate workers on sections of the OHS program that apply to slip and trip prevention. (See page 61.)
- Encourage workers to report issues and near misses to supervisors or to safety or union reps.
- Listen to workers' reports and act on them.
- Provide positive feedback to workers who voice concerns. Keep communication open by reporting back to them. (See page 56.)
- Ensuring the joint health and safety committee reviews the inspections and incident reports and provides recommendations. District wide statistics can be reviewed for trends as well.
- Explain the reasons for risk controls to workers and others.
- Allow workers to try out the controls and get their feedback before making controls permanent.

Training Workers

Training workers gives them a greater understanding of their role in prevention and how their actions matter. Workers who are new, young, unfamiliar with the working environment, and in precarious employment are likely the most at risk. Go over the sections of the OHS program that apply to slips and trips, and cover the following topics:

- What slips and trips are, and their causes and consequences. (Provide statistics and explain how injuries can affect workers personally and professionally.)
- The most common slip and trip hazards at their workplace. (Include specific examples.)
- How to report a slip or trip. (See page 59.)
- How to report a spill. (See page 67.)
- How to use a spill response kit. (See page 67.)
- Expected workplace practices. (See page 67.)

- Footwear requirements or policy. (See page 66.)
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Regular Monitoring and Review

- Periodically audit control effectiveness, especially when changes occur (e.g. new layout, seasonal shifts, worn slip-resistant surfaces).
- Revise controls based on incident trends, worker feedback, or if hazards reappear.

Pay Extra Attention During Winter

- Winter conditions can increase slip and fall injuries due to rain, snow, and ice.
- Review and adjust hazard controls seasonally (e.g. de-icing, snow removal plans, entrance mats, footwear guidelines)

Key Takeaways for Employers

- Slips, trips, and falls cause a significant portion of workplace injuries and costs in B.C.
- They often result from poor traction, clutter, uneven surfaces, or unsuitable footwear.
- Employers play a central role by **identifying hazards, assessing risks, and applying controls** using the hierarchy of controls.
- Strong prevention relies on **clear policies, training, worker engagement, and leadership commitment**.
- Regular monitoring, seasonal planning, and continuous improvement are essential to success.

By making slip, trip, and fall prevention a priority, employers not only reduce injuries and costs, but they also create safer and healthier workplaces where every worker can thrive. Your leadership in safety makes a lasting difference for your team, their families, and your organization's success.

Employer

Responsibilities

- Ensure the health and safety of your workers.
- Train workers to do their work safely, and provide the necessary supervision.
- Provide supervisors with the necessary support and training.
- Regularly inspect your workplace to make sure everything is working properly.
- Address hazards reported by workers.
- Investigate incidents where workers are injured or equipment or property is damaged.
- Cooperate with WorkSafeBC.