

Information Bulletin

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Reducing Slips, Trips and Falls in Restaurants

Slip, trip and fall incidents are the leading cause of serious accidents in the restaurant industry. They most often result in sprains or strains to the back or lower extremities, causing an average of eight days of missed time per incident*. Understanding their causes and taking simple steps to prevent them can lead to higher profits and improved customer satisfaction.

Predominate causes of most slips, trips and falls can be attributed to:

- Wet and/or greasy floors.
- Employees in a hurry.
- Obstructions or debris in aisles and walkways such as food, boxes, equipment, or extension cords.
- Changes in elevation.
- Ice build-up in or around freezer.
- Blind corners

Preventative action to reduce slips, trips and falls can include:

- Require non-slip shoes. Many restaurants require all employees to wear non-slip shoes, such as "Shoes for Crews"®. Ordinary athletic shoes do not provide adequate traction on wet or greasy floors. Consider having payroll deduction for proper shoes.
- Provide good quality floor mats for all kitchen and wet areas and/or use no-skid waxes and surfaces coated with grit for slippery areas. Institute a policy to mop up spills as soon as they occur and post signs warning of wet floors after mopping. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure spills are attended to quickly.
- Install convex mirrors at blind corners

- Instruct staff to carry items only at a height that they can safely see over.
- Keep the floor free from food spillage, silverware, broken glassware, loose mats, torn carpets or other hazards. Repair or replace any defects in flooring such as broken tiles or missing drain covers.
- The 'need for speed' often translates into injury. Don't allow employees to circumvent proper procedure during busy periods.
- If there are stairs, equip the treads with abrasive strips or other nonskid surface.
- Provide indoor-outdoor carpeting or other type of mat at entrance doors in inclement weather.
- Ensure there is adequate lighting (both inside and outside).
- Properly illuminate changes in interior elevations (steps, stairs, etc.)
- Install handrails next to all changes in elevations. If someone starts to slip, a handrail can help them keep their balance or reduce the impact.
- Consider installing a higher friction floor in wet environments

In the unfortunate event there is an incident or accident, know how to respond and investigate to prevent a future incident.

Taking these simple steps can translate into fewer losses and increased customer satisfaction.

*Per BLS Median number of days away from work due to injury or illness, by nature, 2005.

http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/osh/os/osh05_29.pdf

http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/youth/restaurant/slips_foodprep.html

This bulletin is intended only as a reminder and is offered solely as a guide to assist management in its responsibility of providing a safer working environment. This bulletin is not intended to cover all possible hazardous conditions or unsafe acts that may exist. Other unsafe acts or hazardous conditions should also be noted and corrective action taken.