

July 2025 *NEWSLETTER*

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The hidden danger of slip, trip and falls in the workplace

Slips, trips and falls are among the most common and often overlooked workplace hazards, yet they can result in serious injuries, lost time, or even fatalities. In South Africa, slips, trips, and falls have been reported across various industries as a leading cause of lost workday injuries, often resulting from wet or uneven floors compounded by inadequate housekeeping practices.

Section 8(1) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, no 85 of 1993 (OHS Act), compels every employer "to provide and maintain, as far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risk to the health of his employees". This includes implementing safe systems of work and mitigating hazards before resorting to personal protective equipment.

Section 9 of the OHS Act requires employers to ensure that non-employees (e.g., clients, visitors, contractors, learners, guests etc.) are not exposed to hazards arising from any of their work activities.

Section 24 of the OHS Act mandates immediate reporting to the inspector of any incident resulting in serious injury, unconsciousness, or potential permanent harm categories into which many slip, trip and falls may fall into.

Sections 17–20 of the OHS Act establish the framework for health and safety representatives and committees. Representatives must perform monthly workplace inspections, review incidents, and identify hazards such as wet floors, loose cables, and uneven flooring.

Common causes of slip-trip-fall incidents include:

- Wet or greasy surfaces: Especially in kitchens, during cleaning, processing plants, or near entrances exposed to rain.
- Obstructed walkways: Tools, waste, portable extensions or cables not secured.
- Uneven flooring: Poor-quality paving, cracked tiles, or missing mat edges.
- Inadequate signage: Missing "Wet Floor" boards during cleaning or just after a spill has occurred.
- Insufficient lighting: Dark corridors or storage areas where obstacles go unseen.

A risk assessment should be available in all workplaces for slip, trip and falls. Involve employees in the drafting of the risk assessment. Implement suitable control measures and checklists as may be required to ensure the risk is controlled and good housekeeping practises are implemented and maintained.

Prevention measures:

1. Thorough risk assessment: Identify, rate, and control slip, trip and fall hazards.
2. Housekeeping: Daily cleaning routines, immediate spill responses, and clutter-free walkways.
3. Flooring upgrades: Apply slip-resistant surfaces where water and grease accumulate.
4. Wet floor signage: Provide "Wet Floor" boards, train staff on the correct placement to ensure good visibility thereof.
5. Training & PPE: Non-slip footwear for cleaning staff.
6. Adequate lighting: Maintain bulb replacements and install extra lighting in dark corners.
7. Supervision & safety procedures: Implement protocols checked by managers and safety representatives.

First aiders must be trained in treating the basic first aid procedures including fractures, sprains and strains, concussion, head, neck and back injuries. A first aider should be designated on every shift. Employers must ensure first aid facilities are accessible and stocked to treat slip, trip and fall-related injuries.

Suitable first aid equipment in accordance with Government Gazette Notice: R2245 must be checked and maintained on a monthly basis and after incident has occurred. Quick response can significantly reduce injury severity and recovery time.

According to Section 18(1)(g) of the OHS Act, trained safety representatives are empowered to inspect workplaces at agreed intervals. Monthly checks help identify and escalate issues to management or the inspectorate if no corrective action is taken.

These structured checks help catch unnoticed hazards (e.g., loosening floor tiles, missing signage) before they cause harm.

Slips, trips, and falls may seem trivial but can lead to lost time, serious injuries, possible fatalities and legal penalties. The OHS Act clearly outlines duties from risk assessment and safe working procedures to appointment of safety representatives and response to incidents.

By integrating systematic risk assessments, housekeeping, PPE, signage, and first-aid readiness, and by empowering safety representatives to carry out monthly inspections, organisations can safeguard employees and guests and avoid unnecessary suffering or disruption.

With everyone doing their part employers, managers, safety representatives, cleaning staff the slip, trip and fall risks can be greatly reduced.

Our safety message of the month is
"A clean and clear floor is a safe floor. Don't let a slip become your downfall!"

Should you require further assistance of advice feel free to email us on info@topcompliance.co.za

Yours in Health and Safety.

	
Occupational health and safety auditing and consulting	Online safety shop

				
Appointments, checklists and templates	First aid equipment	Signage	Legal posters	Safety Equipment

Courses offered by Top Compliance (Pty) Ltd

ONLINE ACADEMY - https://academy.topcompliance.co.za/		
Occupational Health and Safety Courses	**Online**	**Onsite Excluding travel**
Safety representative – Legal Liability	R980.00	R1300.00
The Occupational Health and Safety Act & responsibilities of management – Legal Liability	R1250.00	R 1730.00
Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment	R735.00	R875.00
Food facility health & safety course in terms of R638	R735.00	R875.00
Basic Ladder Safety Course	R735.00	R810.00
Fire Fighting and Prevention Courses		
Fire Marshal - Basic firefighting	R735.00	R875.00
Fire & Evacuation marshal - Basic firefighting with emergency action planning	R810.00	R950.00

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ONSITE TRAINING
First Aid Courses:

Level 1 - US 119567 - Perform basic life support and first aid procedures	2 days
Level 2 - US 120496 - Provide risk-based primary emergency care/first aid in the workplace	3 days
Level 3 - US 376480 - Provide first aid as an advanced first responder	3 days
Level 1 & 2 - US 119567 & 120496	3 days
Level 1, 2 & 3 - US 119567, 120496 & 376480	5 days
Level 2 & 3 - US 120496 & 376480	3 days
Child and infant CPR & choking	6 hours
Adult CPR & choking	6 hours
Adult CPR & choking and AED	1 day
Occupational Health and Safety Courses	
Safety representative – Legal Liability	1 day
The Occupational Health and Safety Act & responsibilities of management – Legal Liability	1 day
Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment	1 day
Food facility health & safety course in terms of R638	6 hours
Basic Ladder Safety	6 hours
Fire Fighting and Prevention Courses	
Fire Marshal - Basic firefighting	6 hours
Fire & Evacuation marshal - Basic firefighting with emergency action planning	1 day