

Healthcare

# Workplace Safety: Slip and Fall Accidents

## Workplace Injuries

Maintaining healthcare worker safety standards to protect both employees and residents requires vigilance by leaders and team members. Slips and falls are prevalent workplace hazards. Other accidents can result from preventable employee actions. Helping team members understand their roles in creating a safer workplace can reduce accidents.

### Common Causes of Accidents

- **Unsafe Reaching Practices:** Attempting to reach under, over, or around obstacles like refrigerators and freezers, beds, recliners, and other furniture without equipment can result in falls or injuries. Use tools such as reach extenders or step stools.
- **Improper Use of Ladders:** Standing on top rungs or using ladders inappropriately can cause serious falls. Ensure ladders are stable and the correct height for the task.
- **Poor Lighting:** Dimly lit areas obscure vision and increase missteps. Enhance lighting in walkways and working areas for clear visibility.
- **Obstacles:** Cluttered pathways, spilled liquids, and obstructed floors increase the risk of trips and slips. Regular cleaning and immediate spill management are essential to reduce slips, falls, and other accidents.
- **Comprehensive Training:** Conduct routine safety training sessions to reinforce safe practices and awareness of potential hazards.
- **Safety Equipment:** Provide equipment such as proper tools for tasks involving reaching or lifting. Review policies and procedures for employee footwear and ask your carrier about discounts for employees purchasing identified footwear.
  - Crocs and similar footwear, shoes that do not completely enclose the foot, or have a slippery sole should be prohibited as known risks contributing to slips and falls.
- **Reporting Systems:** Encourage a culture where employees feel comfortable reporting hazards or near misses.
- **Signage and Alerts:** Use clear signage to indicate wet floors, uneven surfaces, or areas under maintenance.

### Preventive Measures

- **Risk Management:** Perform routine risk assessments to identify and prioritize potential dangers and address them in accordance to priority. Many human resource platforms have tools to help create risk assessments based on common areas of workforce injuries and claims.
  - Train and re-educate team members routinely on being aware of their surroundings. Looking at the floor and taking notice of wet areas, slippery areas, and other hazards such as ladders, housekeeping carts, and similar.

### Conclusion

Fostering a culture of safety, providing competent training, and employing preventive measures, healthcare facilities can mitigate the risk of slips, falls, and other accidents. Protecting employees increases likelihood of an efficient, productive, and safe environment, ultimately enhancing patient care and staff well-being.

## Call to Action

Committing to routine risk assessments and safety audits, providing ongoing employee education, and reviewing safety protocols promotes a hazard-free workplace.

A safer healthcare environment benefits everyone from visitors to residents and patients to the workforce.

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## REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

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