

1.0 About slips and trips in historic properties



Historic properties continue to serve our communities and attract millions of domestic and international visitors every year. As well as securing these properties for future generations to enjoy, they provide community centres, create jobs, boost the local economy and secure the UK's global tourism appeal.

Introduction

Historic properties are generally safe places considering the high levels of footfall they enjoy and the diversity of activities held in them. However, slips and trips continue to be the most common cause of accidents in many properties, including cathedrals, churches, museums, stately homes and other historic premises.

The Health and Safety Executive reports that slips and trips are the single most common cause of major injury in the UK workplace and account for 31% of all non-fatal injuries to employees (2017/18)¹. This amounted to some 21,730 non-fatal injuries, with 8,658 being specified injuries and 13,072 being over 7-day injuries as set out under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)². However, it is thought that there is significant underreporting, so the figures could be much higher and this is only part of the picture, when factoring in accidents to members of the public.

¹ <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causinj/kinds-of-accident.pdf> 2017/18

² www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/tables/ridkind.xlsx 2017/18, table 2

At Ecclesiastical, we continue to see a significant number of claims resulting from slips and trips. Our experience has shown us³:




Slips and trips dominate



37% employers' liability claims attributed to slips and trips

39% public liability claims are due to slips and trips



The average cost of a claim is **£27,000**



Causes could be attributable to:

The premises themselves	Poor housekeeping	The weather	Other
 <p>39%</p>	 <p>29%</p>	 <p>5%</p>	 <p>25%</p>

Behind these figures sits the individual pain and suffering that results from subsequent injuries. It is often difficult to predict the outcome of a slip or a trip. Whilst many injuries could be classed as minor, others can be quite severe and in some cases are disabling. In rare cases, slips and trips can result in a fatality.

When preventing slips and trips in a historic property, it is important to recognise that they are not factories or building sites and there is a huge variation between them. By their very nature, these locations can challenge the standard approaches to preventing slips and trips. This is usually because of design constraints or the fabric of the building itself.

The guidance that accompanies this document has been produced following a unique joint research project by Ecclesiastical Insurance and the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL), the research arm of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). It looks at the key risk factors associated with slips and trips in historic properties, and identifies ways in which the risks can be mitigated. In many cases, a range of precautions might be necessary depending on individual circumstances. Using this information should help to respond in a proportionate way and – if the need arises – to defend a claim.

Need to contact us?

For further advice Ecclesiastical customers can call our Risk Management Advice Line on **0345 600 7531** (Monday to Friday 09:00 to 17:00, excluding Bank Holidays) or email us at risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com and one of our experts will call you back within 24 hours.



³ Ecclesiastical claims data 2017-2019