

5.0 Preventing Slips



When a person needs more grip to walk than is offered by the floor and their footwear, they will slip.

Introduction

Despite a common view that slips are very simple accidents due entirely to human error, there are several factors that influence the chance of a person slipping. However, not all slips will cause someone to fall over. Typical slip hazards in historic properties include:

- slippery floor materials and coverings
- inadequate lighting particularly on steps and stairs
- cleaning activity, making floors more slippery (e.g. wet mopping or use of polishes)
- wet or contaminated floors from inadequate cleaning or poor maintenance of the building (e.g. leaking roofs)
- spillages of food or drink, particularly in kitchen food preparation areas
- walk-in contaminant from adverse weather (e.g. rainwater)
- growth of algae or moss on footpaths
- accumulations of wet leaves or loose materials on walkways
- adverse weather making footpaths, steps etc. unsafe (e.g. rain, snow and ice)
- events that increase footfall, introduce new hazards or accentuate existing ones.

Please note: this list is not exhaustive.

Slips can normally be prevented through good environmental design and management control. However, it can be difficult to put effective precautions in place without understanding the fundamental reasons why slips happen.

The 'Preventing Slips' modules contained within this guidance (5.1-5.6), consider the various elements of the Health and Safety Executive's **slip potential model**¹. The model highlights the factors that contribute to a risk of someone slipping.

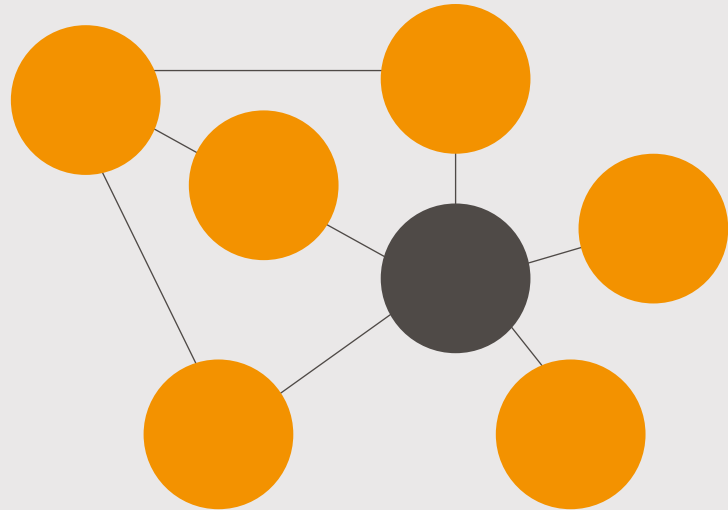
They are:

- Flooring
- Cleaning
- Environment
- People
- Contamination
- Footwear.

Each module considers one of these factors and identifies best practice solutions, outlines some of the specific challenges of implementation in historic properties and highlights other possible solutions.

¹ For further information see www.hse.gov.uk/slips/preventing.htm

Slip potential model



Health & Safety Executive

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