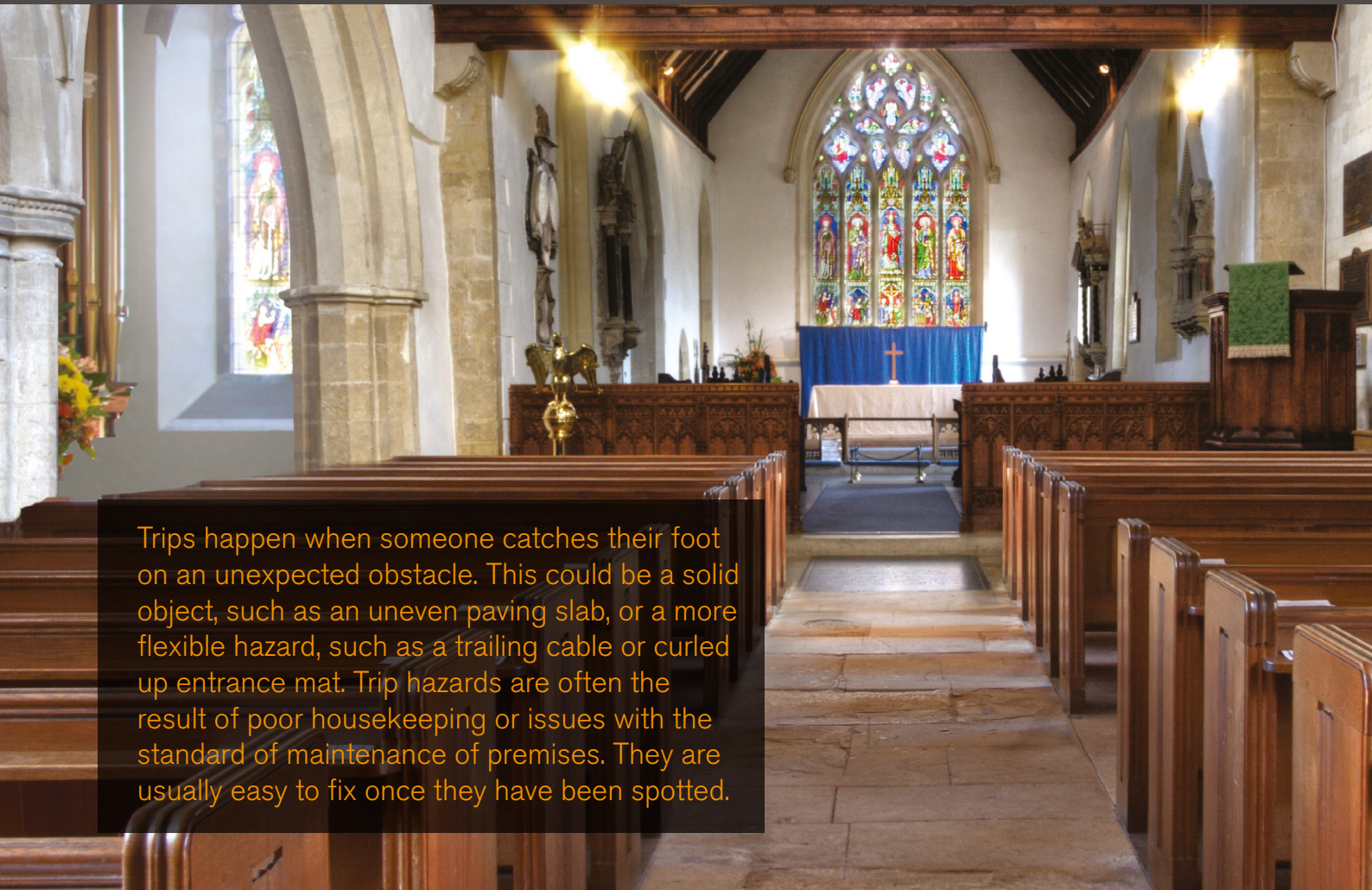


6.0 Preventing trips



Trips happen when someone catches their foot on an unexpected obstacle. This could be a solid object, such as an uneven paving slab, or a more flexible hazard, such as a trailing cable or curled up entrance mat. Trip hazards are often the result of poor housekeeping or issues with the standard of maintenance of premises. They are usually easy to fix once they have been spotted.

Introduction

Some permanent environmental features can also create a risk of tripping, such as single steps or kerbs. These hazards may be more difficult to remove. In this case, it will be necessary to clearly highlight them to give people a good chance of seeing them and avoiding them. Uneven surfaces, such as potholes in car parks, can also cause people to trip or miss their step.

The chance of someone tripping over a hazard depends on how high the hazard is, whether they can see it and how much they lift their feet when walking. A hazard as low as 10mm in height can cause a healthy, working age person to trip. As we age, we pick our feet up less and older people are more likely to trip over smaller obstacles.

In considering the risk from a trip hazard, a sensible height to use is 25mm. This is the value commonly used by engineers when assessing pavement defects as an action value; if the hazard is 25mm high or more they will repair it. However, in using this value to assess the risk from a particular trip hazard it is necessary to consider who may come into contact with it. In a busy walkway even a 10mm hazard may create an unacceptable risk, especially in an area used by older people. Ideally, trip hazards of any height should be avoided.

Examples of trip hazards include:

- loose, damaged and uneven tiles, stone paving, flagstones and floorboards
- trailing cables
- loose, worn, frayed or unfixed carpets, rugs, mats and other floor coverings
- thresholds between different floor coverings or in doorways
- slopes and changes in level
- potholes
- items stored in walkways
- single steps
- inadequate lighting also makes tripping over a hazard more likely.

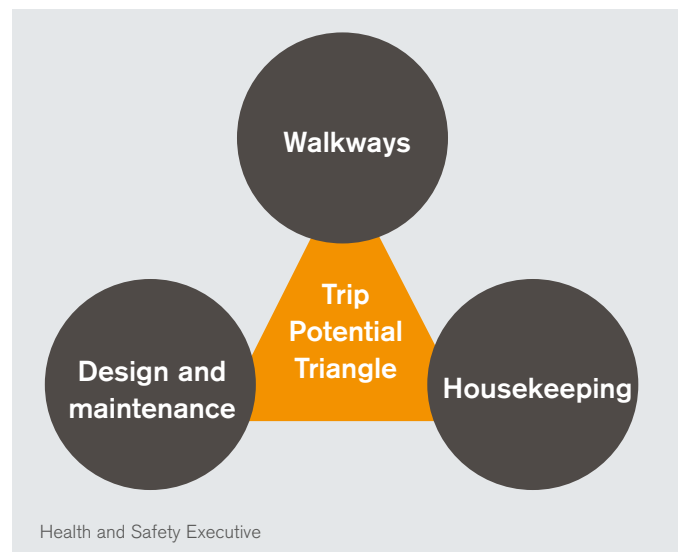
Please note: this list is not exhaustive.

The 'Preventing trips' modules ([modules 6.1](#), [6.2](#) and [6.3](#)) consider the various elements of Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) [trip potential triangle](#). This highlights the factors that contribute to a risk of someone tripping.

They are:

- housekeeping
- maintenance
- walkways.

Each module considers one of these factors identifying best practice solutions, highlighting some of the specific challenges in implementing these in historic properties and outlining some possible solutions.



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.

