Toolbox talk

Slips, trips and housekeeping

A tidy site is a safer site

10 minutes

For: Everyone on site, including visitors, delivery drivers and every trade

Why it matters

HSE says several thousand construction workers are injured each year after a slip or trip on site, many with broken bones or dislocated joints. Often something is in the way, like materials or waste. Most of these injuries could be avoided by managing work areas and access routes well.

Key points

1. Keep your work and storage areas tidy. Housekeeping is everyone's job.
2. Walkways should be clearly marked, well lit and have good footing.
3. Never store materials on access routes or emergency escape routes.
4. Clear waste as you go. Put it in the skips and bins provided.
5. Use cordless tools where you can. Run any cables at high level.
6. Wear suitable footwear with a good grip.
7. Uneven ground causes many trips. Report it and sign it.
8. If you see a risk, sort it, or report it to someone who can.

Sources: HSE: Slips and trips (construction); HSE: Materials storage and waste management (construction); HSE: Slips and trips - causes and prevention overview.

This talk supports, but does not replace, your site-specific risk assessment, method statement, training and supervision. Free to copy and use. **tradefoxapp.com/toolbox-talks/slips-trips-housekeeping**

Slips, trips and housekeeping

Do

- Clear offcuts, packaging and waste regularly, especially anything that can burn.
- Grit icy areas and put stone on muddy routes, or cover them.
- Sign slippery areas and small changes in level you can't remove.
- Use a mechanical aid rather than carrying bulky loads that block your view.
- Report broken lighting on walkways and stairs.

Don't

- Don't let stored materials spread onto footpaths and walkways.
- Don't leave trailing cables across walkways or corridors.
- Don't walk past a hazard thinking it's someone else's job.
- Don't block fire exits or escape routes, even for a minute.
- Don't take shortcuts across rough ground or unmarked areas.

Ask the group

- Where on this site do people trip or slip most, and why?
- Which trade's waste or materials end up on our walkways, and how do we fix that?
- Where are we running cables at floor level that could go high or be avoided with cordless tools?
- What near misses from slips or trips have you seen this week, and were they reported?

If it goes wrong: If someone slips or trips and is hurt, get a first aider and call 999 for serious injuries. Tell your supervisor, and report near misses too so the hazard gets fixed.

On this site

Nearest first aider _____

Emergency assembly point _____

Site-specific hazards and controls _____

_____

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Go further: How to report near misses on site

Sources: HSE: Slips and trips (construction); HSE: Materials storage and waste management (construction); HSE: Slips and trips - causes and prevention overview.

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Attendance register

Slips, trips and housekeeping

Site / project _____ Date and time _____

Presented by _____ Company _____

	Name (print)	Company	Signature
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
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8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			

By signing, attendees confirm they took part in this toolbox talk and understood the key points. Keep this record with your site safety file.

Presenter signature _____ Follow-up actions _____

Quick check

Slips, trips and housekeeping

Tick one answer for each question. Your presenter has the answers.

Name _____ Date _____

1. Who is responsible for keeping work areas tidy?

- [ ] Only the cleaners
- [ ] Everyone on site
- [ ] Only the site manager

2. Where should cables for lighting or mains tools be run?

- [ ] Along the floor by the wall
- [ ] At high level
- [ ] Across the middle of the walkway

3. What should you put down on an icy route?

- [ ] Grit
- [ ] Sand bags
- [ ] Nothing, just walk slowly

4. You spot a trip hazard on a walkway. What should you do?

- [ ] Ignore it if it's not yours
- [ ] Sort it, or report it to someone who can
- [ ] Wait for the weekly inspection

5. Why should flammable waste like packaging and timber offcuts be cleared regularly?

- [ ] It looks untidy only
- [ ] It causes trips and is a fire risk
- [ ] It is not important

Sources: HSE: Slips and trips (construction); HSE: Materials storage and waste management (construction); HSE: Slips and trips - causes and prevention overview.

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For the presenter

Answers and sources

Quick check answers

1. Everyone on site

HSE says everyone should keep their work and storage areas tidy.

2. At high level

HSE says run necessary cables at high level, especially along corridors.

3. Grit

HSE says treat ice with grit and mud with stone, or cover the area.

4. Sort it, or report it to someone who can

HSE says if you see a risk, sort it, or report it to someone who can.

5. It causes trips and is a fire risk

HSE says clear flammable waste regularly; waste in the way also causes trips.

Sources

- HSE: Slips and trips (construction)
  https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/falls.htm
- HSE: Materials storage and waste management (construction)
  https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/storage.htm
- HSE: Slips and trips - causes and prevention overview
  https://www.hse.gov.uk/slips/preventing-overview.htm

> **Presenting tips:** keep it to about 10 minutes, use real examples from your site, ask the group questions rather than reading everything out, and record attendance on the register.

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See it, sort it

1. **Keep walkways clear and lit**
2. **Cables high, not on floors**
3. **Clear your waste as you go**

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Sources and qualifications

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Scope: Great Britain safety legislation unless a nation is identified. Northern Ireland has separate legislation. Site rules can be stricter than minimum legal duties; use the site assessment, instructions and competent supervision.

A4 applicability: no installation-design requirement is asserted in this talk. Its claims are referenced to the subject-specific sources below.

S1. HSE: Construction slips and trips

Injury risk, walkways, footing, housekeeping, leads, lighting and reporting; talk sheet and quiz.

https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/falls.htm

S2. HSE: Materials storage and waste

Clear access/escape routes, planned storage and waste removal; Do/Don't and poster.

https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/storage.htm