A large proportion of major injuries in the workplace are as a result of a slip, trip or fall and are the second highest occurring accident/incident category in KCC for employees. They are also currently one of the highest categories for 3rd parties.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (Regulation 3) require employers to assess risks (including slip, trip or fall risks) and where necessary take action to address them. The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1999 (Regulation 12) ‘require floors to be suitable, in good condition and free from obstructions. People should be able to move around safely’.

In order to manage the risk of slip, trip or fall incidents a suitable and sufficient risk assessment should be undertaken. The assessment should consider what hazards in the workplace may lead to risks of slip, trip or fall injuries. Appropriate and sensible control measures should be implemented to reduce/eliminate the risk of harm. The Health and Safety Executive has produced a hazard spotting checklist which you may find useful to assist with the assessment. This can be found within their document: Preventing slips and trips at work - A brief guide.

There are a number of common causes of slip, trip and fall incidents including:

* insufficient workplace housekeeping e.g. loose/trailing cables, spillages on floors/stairs
* lack of maintenance of flooring e.g. damaged floor/stairs or loose matting/carpet
* wearing inappropriate footwear e.g. flip flops, high heels
* lack of attention due to texting or using mobile phones
* floor cleaning - change of surface from wet to dry or floors left wet with no warning signs
* obscured vision when carrying objects
* desk and filing cabinet drawers left open
* ice and snow
* poor lighting
* bag straps or obstructions in passage way
* poor attitude to health and safety in the workplace – lack of risk assessment and/or hazards not reported.

Preventing risks of slip, trip and fall accident/incidents is often simple and easy to prevent and can be reduced by:

* paying attention to what you are doing
* wearing appropriate footwear
* clearing up spillages promptly or reporting them
* reporting any damaged floors or stairs
* not carrying anything which obscures your view of where you are going
* keeping walkways and work areas tidy
* removing items from the floor if there is a risk of someone falling over them or arrange for them to be removed
* providing sufficient lighting to see potential hazards
* providing adequate bins and storage facilities
* carry out/review risk assessments
* not rushing particularly when on stairs
* holding onto the hand rail when ascending/descending stairs
* carrying out regular premises health and safety inspections and complete actions where necessary
* managing floor cleaning adequately and use appropriate signage/barriers.

Examples of control measures which can be used are:

* train workers in the correct use of safety and cleaning equipment
* ensure cleaning agents are diluted correctly
* clean up spillages immediately using suitable cleaning agent
* cleaning methods/equipment must be appropriate for the type of surface being treated
* ensure floors are not left wet after cleaning, dry it where possible
* ensure cleaning is carried out at suitable times
* floors should be regularly inspected and a formal record kept.

**Weather conditions: wet, ice, frost and snow**

Slip, trip and fall accident/incidents may increase during autumn and winter; there is less daylight, leaves fall onto paths and become wet and slippery, and colder weather causes ice and snow to build up on paths. There are effective actions that you can take during these months to reduce the risk of a slip, trip or fall:

* Ensure lighting is sufficient both outside and inside the workplace for hazards to be seen and avoided.
* Put in place a procedure for removing leaves at regular intervals.
* Consider installing large, absorbent mats or even changing entrance flooring to one which is non-slip ensuring access points into buildings have the means for people to wipe off water, snow or ice from their shoes.
* Put procedures in place to prevent any icy surface forming and/or to keep employees/3rd parties off the slippery surface.
* Carry out a risk assessment and implement control measures to reduce the risk of slips on ice, frost or snow:
* Identify the outdoor areas which are most likely to be affected by ice e.g. building entrances, car parks, walkways, sloped areas and areas constantly in the shade or wet.
* Use grit or similar on areas prone to be slippery in frosty/icy conditions; gritting should be carried out when frost, ice or snow is forecast or when walkways are likely to be damp or wet and the floor temperatures are at, or below freezing. The best time is early evening before the frost settles, if this is possible (or additional salt is required), or use it early in the morning before people arrive.
* Consider covering walkways e.g. by an arbour high enough for people to walk through, or use an insulating material on smaller areas overnight.
* Divert people to less slippery walkways and separate off existing ones with a barrier/warning cones.
* Ensure stocks of salt/grit/sand are adequate for the time of year and foreseeable weather taking action whenever freezing temperatures are forecast.
* It is not always necessary to clear car parks of snow as it can be taken out of use until such time as it is safe to be used. Staff can make alternative parking arrangements providing it is safe to do so.

Risk management and assessment aims to help schools identify potential risks in advance of severe snow and ice and ensure appropriate control measures are implemented. It also assists headteachers in making the right decision on the day by adopting an approach that is grounded in common sense and being proportionate. For information see the KCC ‘winter school closure guidance’ on Kelsi which includes a risk assessment template for snow and ice.

Near misses, and employee/3rd party accident/incidents should be promptly reported to the Health and Safety Team by completing an online accident/incident reporting form HS157.

All reportable slip, trip or fall accidents/incidents should be notified to the HSE within 15 days of the accident by completing an online HSE F2508 form. You will have an opportunity to attach the F2508 to the HS157 when completing the form online.

**Useful information/documents**

HSE preventing slips and trips at work: a brief guide - INDG225 (rev2) including hazard spotting checklist

HSE slips and trips guidance

RosPA slips, trips and falls