

Safety Matters

Education

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Preventing Slips and Falls at School

Wet weather can be a nuisance since it usually means being trapped inside and dealing with wet messes tracked in by students and faculty. Moreover, the wet walking surfaces these conditions create present a serious slipping hazard for you, your students and fellow faculty.

In fact, surfaces that are wet for any reason—weather-related or not—are a workplace hazard. Water can come from rain, cleaning and accident spills, wet winter conditions or activities that require the use of water. Slipping on a wet surface can result in bruises, strains and sprains, lacerations, fractures, head trauma and even fatality. And those incidents can stack up to lost wages or a lawsuit. Fortunately, there are several steps you can take to keep your students and fellow faculty safe.

Be Aware of Hazards

Each educational institution is different, so the ways in which you deal with wet surfaces may vary. However, following these general guidelines is a good start.

- Clean up spills immediately.
- Use caution signs to clearly identify when a surface is wet or likely to become wet, and remove the signs as soon as the surface is dry.
- Barricade affected areas where possible.
- Near wet areas, check for equipment and electrical currents that may not be grounded and wires that are not insulated. Never use electrical equipment while standing on a wet surface.
- Place floor mats at all entrances to reduce the amount of water tracked in from

outside.

- Be sure to wear shoes with slip-resistant soles, and encourage your students to do the same.
- Report any spills or wet areas that you notice to your supervisor.

Anti-slip Tips

If you or your students do walk through a wet area, follow these tips to avoid slipping and falling.

- Slow down! Rushing is not worth a serious injury or lost wages.
- Take small steps to keep your balance centered.
- Walk with your feet pointed slightly outward to form a stable base.
- Make wide turns at corners.
- Use handrails if present. Otherwise, keep your hands out for balance.
- Concentrate on the surface you are walking on.
- Be prepared for slippery patches.

Communicate the danger of wet surfaces to your students and encourage them to use the same caution you do when the floors are wet for any

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reason. This simple lesson could save them a good deal of pain and maybe even their lives!

Cooperate and Stay Alert

We care about your safety at . If you have any doubt about the safety of your workspace, whether it concerns a wet surface or another hazard, talk to your supervisor. It takes the cooperation of our entire team to keep everyone safe!