

# Slip and Fall Prevention for Your School

Slip, trip and fall incidents are the leading cause of accidental injury at public schools in Wisconsin, at home and in communities. Over 25,000 deaths are caused by falls each year in the United States, and the toll is increasing dramatically.

These claims impact your workers compensation and general liability policies. An aging population is a key contributing factor to the problem because older people are more at risk of falling and are more likely to sustain serious injuries when they fall. While no walking surface can be made completely “fall proof,” a formal slip and fall prevention program can dramatically reduce the risk of incidents.

Every school is at risk for slip and fall incidents that affect employees and the general public. To help reduce slip and fall accidents and related costs, your school should implement a comprehensive prevention program, which includes the following steps:

## Assign Responsibilities for Slip Prevention Activities

Although slip and fall prevention is everyone’s job, you should designate a school safety coordinator to make sure all slip and fall prevention activities are completed in a timely manner. The coordinator can also be the go-to person for employees to report any slip and fall hazards they encounter and documenting salting during changing weather days.

## Establish Slip and Fall Prevention Rules

Establish safety rules to prevent slip, trip and fall accidents. The rules will vary depending on your school’s policies, but some basic rules include:

- No horseplay, running and fighting.
- Clean up spills immediately; protect spill areas if they cannot be cleaned up immediately.
- Keep tools and materials organized in tech ed classes.
- If you see a slip or trip hazard do something about it or report it immediately. It is everyone’s responsibilities to identify and report slip and fall hazards, especially during public event activities.
- Good housekeeping helps prevent injuries and keeping the floor dry during winter.
- Wear appropriate footwear for a task; avoid high heels or leather soled shoes and instead wear slip-resistant footwear during the winter. We live in Wisconsin and appropriate footwear is important.
- Monitor mats and runners to ensure they are providing proper slip resistance and do not become a trip hazard and rotate them when wet. Provide floor fans to dry high traffic areas.

## Train Staff to Prevent Slips and Falls

Train all employees on the various slip and fall hazards they may encounter, as well as on practices and procedures to reduce the risk of slip and fall accidents. Train maintenance staff on proper floor cleaning procedures, snow and ice management procedures, and appropriate use of warning devices or barricades.

## **Prevent Falls with a Walkway and Surface Audit**

Inspect walking surfaces regularly, both indoors and out. If snow or ice accumulation is possible in your area, inspect outdoor walkways daily during the winter and early spring seasons. Keep in mind that pavement temperature, not air temperature, determines whether walkways are icy or just wet. Inspect hard-surfaced floors near building entrances frequently throughout the day during wet or snowy conditions.

## **Mitigate Slip and Fall Hazards**

Implement immediate corrective measures to address any known slip and fall hazards. Short-term “quick fixes,” and warning or barricade devices may be appropriate until permanent repairs can be scheduled. Connect with your insurance company partner as they may have some good resources on prevention of accidents.

## **Investigate Slip and Fall Accidents**

A [formal accident investigation program](#) helps quickly determine the root cause of any slip and fall accident and take prompt action to prevent recurrence. If a slip or fall incident occurs, first assess the situation to make sure there are not any injuries.

If there are injuries, make sure the injured person gets the assistance they need. Regardless of if the injured person is an employee or not, [fill out a slip/fall incident report](#).

Protect the scene of the accident to make sure no one else gets hurt and so an [accident investigation](#) can be conducted.

Once a root cause is identified, take corrective actions as soon as possible.

**Prevention of slip and falls is critical during the winter months and the rest of the year as well. Please reach out and let us know how we can assist your school in mitigation of these frequent accident source of claims.**

As a bonus, EMC Insurance does have an effective process for preventing claims in this area. Here is a link for the Smart Steps Toolkit you can share with schools: <https://www.emcins.com/smart-steps-toolkit>.

This information is brought to you by one of the WASB Endorsed Agencies: TRICOR Insurance, LLC. For more information, contact John Gibson at 608-338-1189 or [jgibson@tricorinsurance.com](mailto:jgibson@tricorinsurance.com).