

# Slip, trip, and fall prevention guide.

# Let's hit the ground running (not slipping)

Slips, trips, and falls are one of the leading causes of workplace injuries — but most can be prevented with a little awareness and proactive care. This guide highlights common hazards and simple ways to help reduce risk across your property.







## Slip and fall prevention program

A strong prevention program helps you spot and fix hazards before they lead to injuries. Focus on these key steps:

1. **Train your team:** Teach employees how to recognize and fix hazards—from cleaning spills promptly to using wet floor signs correctly
2. **Audit walkways regularly:** Document inspections and take quick action when issues are found
3. **Make hazard reporting easy:** Encourage employees to report unsafe conditions right away
4. **Test flooring for traction:** Identify slick surfaces and improve them with traction coatings or mats
5. **Plan ahead for winter:** Create a written snow and ice maintenance plan before the season begins, including contracts for snow removal
6. **Use mats wisely:** Outline where and when mats are used, and create an inspection and replacement schedule
7. **Promote safe footwear:** Require slip-resistant shoes that fit your workplace conditions



### Need help getting started?

EMC offers an online slip, trip, and fall prevention program template.

## Housekeeping

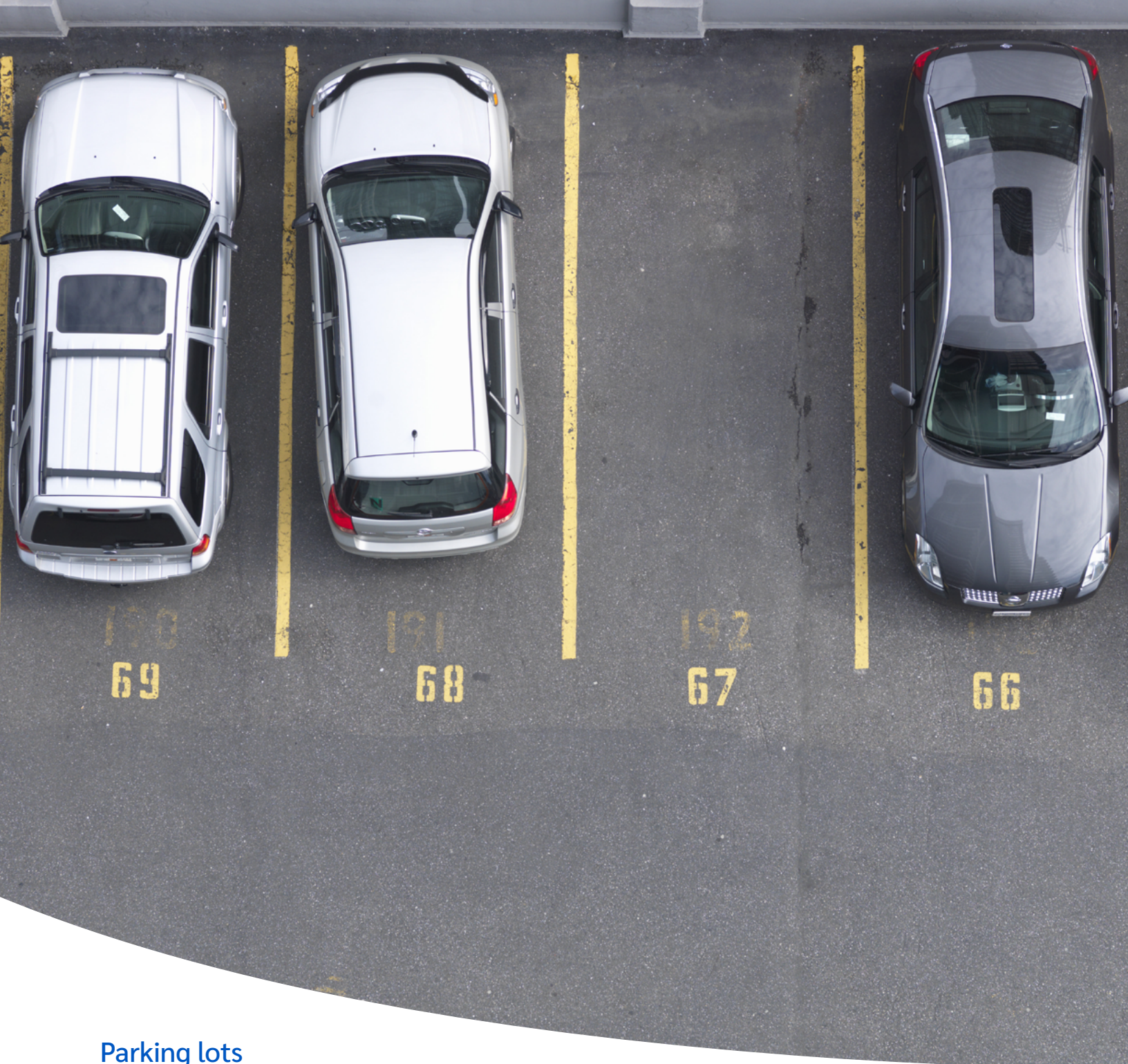
Clutter and debris are among the easiest slip and trip hazards to prevent.

- **Keep walkways clear:** Mark designated walking areas and keep them free of tools, boxes, and other obstructions
- **Avoid low-lying obstacles:** Keep items off the floor and displays at knee level or higher
- **Clean slippery surfaces:** Sawdust, powder, or other residues make floors slick—use grit strips or mats and sweep often
- **Manage cords safely:** Avoid running cords across walkways; if needed, use ceiling drops, extra outlets, or high-visibility cord covers

## Winter weather

Snow and ice can turn any walkway into a hazard. Preparation is key.

- **Stay ahead of storms:** Clear parking lots and sidewalks before employees arrive and check conditions throughout the day
- **Prepare for changing conditions:** Place shovels, sand, and ice melt near doorways to enable a quick response to changing conditions
- **Watch for refreeze:** Black ice often forms overnight; inspect and treat walkways regularly, and redirect downspouts away from walkways
- **Use ice melt wisely:** Follow manufacturer directions to avoid slippery buildup or damage to flooring; and push the slush created by ice melt from sidewalks as soon as possible
- **Pre-treat when possible:** Apply a liquid brine before storms to prevent ice from bonding to pavement
- **Choose the right product:** Use ice melt suitable for the temperature range, and avoid applying it to concrete less than two years old



## Parking lots

Outdoor areas can hide many slip and trip hazards, especially in poor lighting or bad weather.

- **Mark tire stops clearly:** Paint them a contrasting color and make sure they're centered in parking spaces
- **Repair potholes quickly:** Even small ones can collect water and cause slips or trips; gravel or paver base may be used as a temporary solution until permanent repairs can be made
- **Clean slick spots:** Address oil leaks and standing water promptly, and pressure wash as needed to remove residue or algae
- **Traffic safety:** Assure pedestrian paths and crossings are appropriately marked and vehicular traffic directions are clear and legible





## Stairs and ramps

Falls on stairs and ramps are common but preventable.

- **Install sturdy handrails:** Place handrails on the right side (when descending) of any stairs with four or more risers—and both sides of ramps; choose rounded rails for a better grip (between 1¼–2 inches in diameter) and placed 30–34 inches above the stair tread
- **Increase visibility:** Add bright, contrasting edge markings or traction tape on stair treads and make sure illumination levels are appropriate and maintained
- **Repair damaged steps:** Replace or resurface cracked or uneven stairs and make sure riser height and tread run dimensions are appropriate for the angle of the stairs
- **Add traction to ramps:** Apply nonslip coatings or install traction strips, especially on wood or aluminum ramps that get slick when wet

## Sidewalks and curbs

Small cracks or height changes can easily cause trips.

- **Level uneven surfaces:** A ¼” vertical change in elevation or a ½” gap between sidewalk sections should be grinded, filled, or replaced; mark hazards with slip-resistant paint or cones until repairs are made
- **Make curbs visible:** Paint curbs and ramps in a contrasting color like yellow; and consider installing a curb ramp with flared sides
- **Control landscaping:** Trim back vegetation and remove gravel or debris from walkways
- **Discourage shortcuts:** Place noticeable borders or obstacles to guide people along safe paths
- **Keep sidewalks open:** Use tire stops or bollards so parked cars don’t block walkways; ensure the walking path is at least three feet wide at all times

## Mats

Mats are your first line of defense—when used correctly.

- **Use the three-step system**
  1. Outdoor scraper mat
  2. Scraper or wiper mat just inside the door
  3. Walk-off wiper mat farther inside
- **Avoid patchwork mats:** Use large, single mats to cover entry areas instead of overlapping small ones; walk-off carpet tiles are another good option
- **Inspect regularly:** Clean or extract mats frequently, especially during wet weather; replace mats that are worn, curled, or slick
- **Keep mats in place:** Choose mats with slip-resistant backing or secure them with adhesive or tape to prevent movement
- **Add mats near water sources:** Place water-absorbing mats near fountains, sinks, and beverage stations to prevent drips from becoming hazards





## Other issues

A few small habits can go a long way toward preventing slips and falls.

- **Provide step stools:** Don't let employees use chairs or unstable objects to reach high places; supply sturdy, rated step stools or ladders that safely support 250 pounds and include a top rail
- **Require proper footwear:** Prohibit open heels, spiked heels, and flip-flops; encourage slip-resistant footwear designed for your work environment
- **Know your floors:** Test floor traction to identify areas that need improvement
- **Use wet floor signs correctly:** Only display them when floors are actually wet; leaving them out too long can cause people to ignore them—or trip over them
- **Check lighting:** Replace burnt-out bulbs and ensure fixtures provide enough light for safe walking; adjust timers as seasons change

## Addressing employee behaviors

Even with safe environments, personal awareness matters.

**Encourage employees to:**

- Stay on walkways and avoid shortcuts
- Look about 10–15 feet ahead for potential hazards
- Slow down near obstacles or wet areas
- Step carefully over cracks or raised edges—they're often taller than they look
- Look down when turning corners for low-lying objects
- Treat wet surfaces as if they're icy
- Don't assume mats catch all moisture—floors beyond them can still be slick
- Stay focused—stop walking when texting, reading, or talking on a phone
- Wear the right shoes for the conditions
- Keep hands free when entering or exiting vehicles to help maintain balance



## Putting it all together

Preventing slips, trips, and falls isn't about one big change — it's about consistent habits that help protect people every day. Regular inspections, good housekeeping, and employee awareness all play a role in helping keep your workplace safe and productive.

### Learn more

This guide covers the most common hazards, but every organization is different. Inspect your property regularly and create a safety policy that fits your needs.

For more tools and resources to help prevent slips, trips, and falls, visit [emcinsurance.com](https://emcinsurance.com) and select Loss Control.



Learn more



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