

# Safety Management Standard

## Slips, Trips and Falls

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## Document Control

Developed By: Health and Safety Team

Consultation with: Strategic Health Safety & Wellbeing Group  
Trust Joint Partnership Forum

Approved by: Strategic Health Safety & Wellbeing Group

Print Name & Position: Amanda Rawlings  
Chief People Officer  
Chair of Strategic Health Safety & Wellbeing Group

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Health and Safety Team

## 1.0. Introduction

University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust recognises its duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAWA), The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 in taking steps to control slips, trips and falls in the workplace.

This Safety Management Standard (SMS) works in conjunction with UHDB Trust's Health and Safety Policy.

Slips and trips are the most common cause of major injuries at work and can happen almost anywhere. They account for over a third of all reported major injuries. 95% of major slips result in broken bones and they can also be the initial cause for a range of other types of accident such as a fall from height.

In the health service, slips, trips and falls account for around half of all reported major injuries to employees. Some users of health or care services can be particularly vulnerable to falls injuries. Falls on the same level account for a significant number of injuries to service users - many of which are preventable.

These incidents can be cut dramatically through planning and pro-active management together with good housekeeping.

## 2.0. Purpose and Outcome

The Trust will provide a safe working environment by minimising avoidable accidents or incidents relating to slips, trips and falls. This applies to permanent staff, agency workers, locum, bank staff, contractors, members of the public and patients attending UHDB.

## 3.0. Definitions Used

<b>Fall</b>	An event from a position which results in a person or body part of the person coming into contact with the ground or other surface lower than the person, usually preceded by one of the following:
<b>Slip</b>	An uncontrolled slide of the foot, feet, or hand causing a loss of balance. This is either corrected or causes a person to fall.

<b>Trip</b>	An event where the foot, feet, or body comes into contact with an obstacle or obstruction causing a loss of balance. This is either corrected or causes a person to fall.
<b>Work at Height</b>	If a person could be injured falling from height, even if it is at or below ground level (excluding staircases in a permanent workplace).
<b>Pedestrian Route</b>	A pedestrian route means a route for pedestrian traffic and includes any stairs, staircase, fixed ladder, doorway, gateway, loading bay or ramp.
<b>Access Equipment</b>	Any equipment that is specifically designed to allow the user to work safely at height (step stools, ladders).

## 4.0. Law

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAWA) places a duty on employers to ensure the health and safety of employees and others who may be affected by their work activities. This includes taking steps to control slip and trip risks.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 place a duty on employers and self-employed people to assess risks to health and safety from their undertaking. The duty holder must also identify what measures are needed to comply with health and safety requirements and make arrangements to manage these measures effectively.

### **The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992**

The regulations require floors and pedestrian routes to be suitable, in good condition and free from obstructions. People should be able to move around safely, and the surfaces of floors and pedestrian routes should be maintained, treated and repaired so they can be cleaned properly.

Cleaning should be carried out by an effective and suitable method and without creating, or exposing anyone to, a health or safety risk.

The surfaces of floors and pedestrian routes should be free from any hole, slope, or uneven or slippery surface which is likely to cause:

- a person to slip, trip or fall
- a person to drop or lose control of anything being lifted or carried
- instability or loss of control of vehicles and/or their loads

A secure and substantial handrail should be provided and maintained on at least one side of every staircase, except at points where a handrail would obstruct entry or exit. Every open side of a staircase should be securely fenced.

For further reading please visit:

[Workplace health, safety and welfare - L24 \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/l24/)

## Work at Height Regulations 2005

Work at height means work in any place where if there were no precautions in place, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury. For example you are working at height if you:

- are working on a ladder, a flat roof, steps, podium, other equipment stood off the ground
- could fall through a fragile surface
- could fall into an opening or a hole
- are carrying out any works conducted above or below floor level

Employers and those in control of any work at height activity must make sure work is properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people. This includes using the right type of equipment for working at height.

Low-risk, relatively straightforward tasks will require less effort when it comes to planning and common sense tells you no particular precautions are necessary. Factors to weigh up include the height of the task, the duration and frequency, and the condition of the surface being worked on.

For further information please visit:

[Work at height - HSE](https://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/)

## 5.0. Key Responsibilities / Duties

### Employers' Responsibilities

UHDB has a responsibility to make effective the safety of employees and the safe management of the environment for employees and service users as outlined in the Trust Health and Safety Policy.

The Trust will in consultation with employees and their representatives comply with the relevant regulations and guidance.

This safety management standard excludes inpatients for which there is a separate specific policy – Trust Policy and Procedures for the Prevention of In-Patient Falls and the Use of Bed Safety Equipment.

### Managers Responsibilities

- Responsible for ensuring that the areas under their control are managed effectively to prevent or adequately control the potential for exposure to hazards such as ensuring walkways, entrances and exits are kept clear of obstructions and hazards and ensuring that spills, defective flooring and obstructions are dealt with as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- Ensure that access equipment such as step stools, access platforms and ladders are fit for purpose, meet the correct British Standards and are suitable for staff to use and the task that is being undertaken.
- Ensure that risk assessments are carried out for work activities under their supervision and are recorded
- Communicate the findings of risks assessment to staff and others under their management
- Ensure appropriate control measures are adhered to
- Ensure information, instruction and training is provided and supervision where required
- Review processes and control measures if anything changes
- Report any hazards or faults and situations that present a serious and imminent risk
- Ensuring that staff are aware of any additional hazards such as those that are caused temporarily by workmen carrying out repairs

## Employees Duties

- Take care of their own health and safety and that of others
- Co-operate to help comply with health and safety legislation
- Follow any instructions and health and safety training provided
- Only use equipment following adequate training
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment as required
- Reporting any working conditions to management that may give rise to a risk of slip, trip, or fall including falls from height.
- On discovering a hazard, individuals should not presume that this is already being dealt with and should take action to resolve the problem, or if this is not possible, place hazard warning signs at the area in question and contact domestic services

## **6.0. Standards**

The following standards must be adhered to:

- In the first instance when access equipment is identified and required to be purchased, the Purchasing Department has responsibility for ensuring that this is purchased from a reliable supplier and has been through an appropriate and robust approval process in terms of its suitability.
- Ensure that all persons who use access equipment have received adequate training for purposes of health and safety, including any risks which such use may entail and precautions to be taken.
- Access equipment must be inspected, repaired, serviced, maintained in a safe condition and must not pose any added risk to staff, patients, visitors or contractors.
- Access equipment found to be faulty or damaged must be removed from use and reported to Estates.
- Floor surfaces are to be suitable for the area, to meet current standards and able to be cleaned to a healthcare standard without becoming slippery over time.
- All floor, lift and stairway surfaces will be cleaned on a regular basis. Specialist flooring, e.g., entrance matting, will be cleaned regularly.
- Damaged floor surfaces, or external pavement/roadway surfaces, are to be reported to the Maintenance Department via the Helpdesk as soon as possible.



- When floors are being washed appropriate “wet floor” signs will be displayed to warn of the danger. Spillages are to be cleaned up as soon as possible and cordoned off wherever possible until cleaning has taken place. Procedures must be in place for both routine and responsive cleaning.
- In a ward or clinic, the local domestic staff will normally clean spillages, with the exception of body fluids. Body fluids will be cleaned by the nursing staff, as per the Trust Policy and Procedures for Infection Control. All other spillages are to be reported to the Domestic Services.
- Storerooms should be kept neat and tidy at all times. Items should be stored within reach wherever possible, and if they have to be stored at high level, they should be securely sited and accessed by appropriate equipment.
- Materials will not be stored on pedestrian routes unless prior approval has been gained from management and no health and safety legislation is being contravened (Fire Regulations).
- No material is to be stored in such a way as to cause a tripping hazard or in such a way that it may fall and cause an injury or damage.
- Wherever possible cables or other trailing material will be kept away from pedestrian routes.
- Equipment should be maintained to prevent any leaks of oil, water etc. and faults should be promptly reported for attention.
- All staff are responsible for ensuring that their personal workspace (e.g., desk and the area underneath and around is kept tidy. They should ensure that desk drawers and filing cabinet drawers are not left open when unattended.
- All areas should be adequately lit so that obstructions and potentially slippery surfaces can be seen and avoided – this covers internal areas and external footpaths and car parks. Failed lighting should be reported to the Maintenance Department.
- **External Areas** - The Maintenance Department are responsible for gritting the external roadways and paths in ice and snow, so as to minimize the risk of staff and visitors slipping outside. They are also responsible for the general maintenance of the site external areas, including car parks and footpaths.
- **Work at Height** - Work at height is to be carried out only after being properly planned and organised. Guidance for working at height can be found within the separate and dedicated SMS Working at Height.

## 7.0. Risk Assessment

A risk assessment must be carried out and documented, using the 5 step process:

- Identify hazards
- Identify those who may be at risk
- Assess the risk & employ controls
- Record findings
- Review as required

Slips, trips and falls should form part of the departmental risk assessment using the general risk assessment standard template.

Pro-active and reactive methods should be used in the reduction of risks. Proactive includes safety walkabouts, audits and risk assessments. Reactive includes incident reporting and analysis of incident statistics.

A risk assessment must be completed before carrying out any work tasks using access equipment, which may expose a person to harm. Any control measures found necessary from the risk assessment must be implemented and kept under review.

**Further guidance on the risk assessment procedure is available in the Risk Assessment Safety Management Standard.**

## 8.0. Information, Instruction, Training and Supervision

University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust shall provide initial and continual training for employees.

All staff will be provided with suitable and sufficient health and safety information including, where appropriate, written instructions for use of access equipment. The information should be comprehensible to all users, giving special consideration to staff with language difficulties or disabilities.

Adequate supervision will be in place as necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of employees taking into account factors such as competence, experience and maturity.

At ward and department level, managers, and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that all staff have awareness of the hazards and risk levels associated with slips, trips, falls, and falls from height as well as the means for reporting through Trust policies and procedures.

## 9.0. Monitoring & Review

This Safety Management Standard will be regularly monitored and reviewed by the Health and Safety Team to:

- Ensure it continues to comply with legislation
- Ensure that it is reasonably practicable to implement to all those concerned within the Trust

## 10.0. Further information

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has a range of information on slips, trips and falls. Information is available at: [Slips and trips - HSE - Slips and trips - HSE](#)

For information on specific risks consult one of our other health & safety management standards or use the search function at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/>

**For further advice, please contact the Health and Safety Team.**

We hope you find this SMS useful; if you require further information, please contact one of the Health and Safety Team:



General enquiries during normal hours

07385 411684

07385 411683

07385 343668

07387 248730

Out of Hours

07385 343631

07385 411682



[dhft.healthandsafety@nhs.net](mailto:dhft.healthandsafety@nhs.net)

