

Watch Your Step

An Employer's Guide to Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls in the Food and Beverage Industry

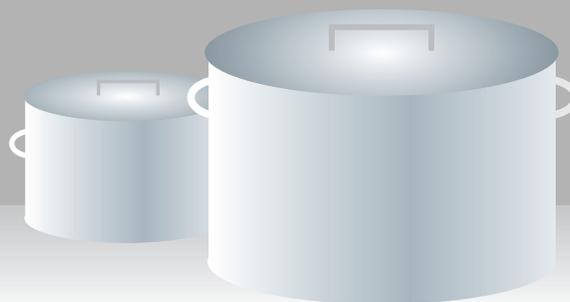
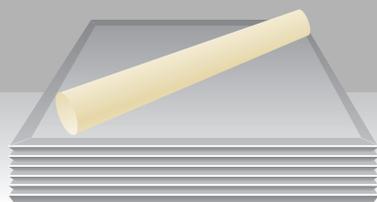
SLIP



TRIP



FALL



WHY FOCUS ON SLIPS, TRIPS, AND FALLS?

Watch Your Step outlines key strategies for preventing slip, trip, and fall injuries in the food and beverage industry. The information in this guide should be useful to owners, employers, supervisors, and managers. You can use this guide if you are starting a new business or if you are looking to improve health and safety in an existing foodservice facility.



Resources for you

Throughout this document you will find links (highlighted in **blue**) to sector-specific resources, such as checklists, safety talks, and orientation guides.

These resources are also listed at the end of this guide.

Benefits of an injury prevention program

- Demonstrates your company's commitment to a healthy and safe workplace culture.
- Prevents injuries and unnecessary suffering for workers.
- Improves employee morale — healthy, happy workers make for a better overall guest experience.
- Helps you retain knowledgeable, experienced employees.
- Prevents the cost of hiring and training new workers.
- Prevents the costs associated with downtime immediately following an accident.
- Helps minimize WorkSafeBC claims, reducing your annual premiums (experience rating).
- Keeps you in compliance with the legal requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation.

Costs to the industry

The food and beverage industry may not initially be seen as dangerous, but there are many hazards that can lead to potentially serious injuries. Slips, trips, and falls are a leading cause of time-loss injuries in the food and beverage industry.

Injuries to employees such as servers, server assistants, cooks and dishwashers can cause personal suffering and result in increased costs for your company. By focusing on injury prevention, you can help keep your employees healthy, improve workplace morale, and save your company money.

Costs to your facility

When you factor in your profit margin, even a relatively minor accident can have a significant impact on your facility's bottom line. For example, if you have a profit margin of 3% and there's an accident that results in \$1,000 of uninsured costs, you'll need to make \$33,000 in sales to make up for it.



Did you know?

- Slips, trips, and falls account for 22.5% of all time-loss claims for casual dining, fine dining, fast-food restaurants, and industrial catering.
- These accidents account for 35.7% of the total claims costs paid out — nearly \$19 million — over a five-year period.

WorkSafeBC has a [Hospitality Safety Calculator](#) that shows examples of the financial impact an accident could have on your facility.

When an employee is injured on the job, the insurance costs are only the tip of the iceberg. If you factor in the additional hidden costs, it becomes clear that you have a lot to lose if you don't focus on injury prevention.



INSURED COSTS

- Coverage for injuries, diseases, and damage (for example, WorkSafeBC premiums, extended health benefits, short-term and long-term disability)

UNINSURED COSTS

- Sick pay
- Extra wages and overtime payments for replacement workers
- Lost time
- Investigation time
- Reduced productivity
- Production delays
- Fines
- Potential legal costs
- Excess on any claim
- Loss of contracts
- Loss of business reputation

REQUIREMENTS AND BEST PRACTICES

Employers are legally required to take reasonable steps to ensure a safe workplace for their employees. This includes developing and implementing [an occupational health and safety \(OHS\) program](#) that is specific to the workplace. Two key components of an effective OHS program are risk assessments and control of hazards.



Requirements for OHS programs are described in [sections 3.1 to 3.4](#) of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation.

Conduct a risk assessment

The first step to preventing slips, trips, and falls is to conduct a [risk assessment](#) to help identify hazards that could lead to these types of accidents. For example, is there an area that is more likely to be wet or greasy? Does furniture create a tripping hazard? Do your employees use ladders, stepstools, or stairs?

There are [several factors to consider](#) when looking for hazards. It can be helpful to use a [risk assessment tool](#).

Control the hazards

Once you have identified hazards, look for ways to control them. The basic types of controls must be implemented in the following order, whenever possible:

1. Elimination or substitution
2. Engineering controls
3. Administrative controls
4. Personal protective equipment

Use best practices that are specific to your facility

You are not required to use all of the best practices described in this guide. Many of them are practical, proven methods that are widely used in the food and beverage industry; however, it's up to you to decide which approaches work best for your facility. You may also need to develop controls that are not described in this guide.

1. ELIMINATION OR SUBSTITUTION

Whenever possible, eliminate the hazard so there's no risk of injury. Ask the following:

- Is the task necessary to begin with?
- Can the hazardous part of the task be removed?
- Can the task be done in such a way that no workers are exposed to the hazard?

If you can't eliminate the hazard, substitute a safer material or process. Ask the following:

- Can a different machine or tool be used?
- Can a less hazardous material or chemical be used?
- Will alternative practices reduce exposure to the hazard?

Tips

- *Use a floor cleaner with a degreaser to reduce the risk of slipping.*
- *If possible, install slip-resistant flooring.*



2. ENGINEERING CONTROLS

Engineering controls are physical changes to the way tasks are done — for example, re-designing workstations or modifying equipment to make it safer or more ergonomic.

- Keep tile floors clean and dry by following [best practices for floor cleaning](#).
- Repair machinery, equipment, and plumbing that may be leaking or causing spills.
- Install non-slip and anti-fatigue mats in kitchens and other work areas.
- Install non-slip adhesive strips in areas where mats are not appropriate, such as stairs and entrances.
- Make sure carpets do not cause a tripping hazard.
- Make sure stairs are safely built to code with handrails and lit so they're visible.
- Install or upgrade lighting to improve visibility.
- Install mirrors at blind corners.
- Make equipment and supplies more accessible to reduce the need for ladders or stools.
- Adjust room layouts so there is enough space between tables and in aisles.
- Use chairs that have a compact footprint (no legs sticking out).

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- Can a different machine or tool be used?
- Can a less hazardous material or chemical be used?
- Will alternative practices reduce exposure to the hazard?

The culture of rushing

Fast-paced, hectic environments are common in the service industry. But don't let the need for speed get in the way of addressing hazards in your workplace. Remind your employees to be mindful of the potential for slips, trips, and falls — even if they're in a rush.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS

Administrative controls are changes to the way work is organized and performed. This can include planning, organizing, and scheduling of resources and staffing. Best practices are an important form of administrative control.

THE HIRING PROCESS

Tailor your hiring process to screen for safety-conscious workers. During interviews be clear about the physical demands and safety expectations that are part of the job.

- Develop a realistic [job profile](#), and ensure that the candidate's physical abilities fit the profile.
- Include health and safety requirements and the physical demands of the job in your [job description](#).
- Include questions about physical ability and health and safety when [pre-screening](#) and during the interview.
- Include a tour of your workplace in the interview process to show the work environment and to demonstrate any physically demanding aspects.
- When conducting a [reference check](#), ask if the candidate has complied with safe work practices. Try to determine the candidate's physical ability and attitude toward health and safety.



ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

- [Orient all new workers](#) before they start their first shift.
- Train employees to clean as they go, wherever possible.
- Train workers so they know how to identify hazards and what to do about them (for example, WHMIS training).
- Hold [safety talks](#) to deal with issues in your workplace. A safety talk is a brief, informal meeting that you can use to educate your employees about hazards and how to deal with them.
- Train your employees to select and use stepstools and ladders.

Training and supervision requirements

- Orientations for new workers
- Orientations for experienced workers in new areas or situations
- Ongoing training, as necessary
- Ongoing supervision to make sure workers continue to work safely, as trained

MISCELLANEOUS

- Conduct regular inspections, including formal [monthly inspections](#) and informal daily (or pre-shift) inspections. Use an inspection checklist to make the process easier.
- Hold monthly, documented health and safety meetings.
- Balance work-rest cycles to manage fatigue and avoid accidents. Make sure your employees take regular breaks, as required under the *Employment Standards Act*. Use job rotation, if possible, to keep workers fresh and alert.
- Consider the circulation patterns or “process flow” of servers in the room. Use separate entrances and exits from kitchens, bars, or other work areas to improve flow and minimize collisions.
- Keep work areas and walkways clear of tripping hazards such as boxes and electrical cords.
- Clean up spills immediately, whenever possible. Set up a “wet floor” sign (or a mop and bucket) to alert employees and customers to slippery areas.
- Make sure mops and such are in good condition and don’t spread grease or grime.
- Keep an eye on areas such as entrances or foyers where water or snow is tracked in during rainy or winter months. Consider placing a runner rug in those areas.
- Keep store fronts and parking lots free of debris and ice and in good repair.
- Ensure that exterior areas are well lit.

4. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

PPE provides protection against hazards. It should be used when other safety controls are not practical, or in addition to other controls. For example, to help prevent slips, trips, and falls, make sure your employees wear slip-resistant footwear, such as [Shoes for Crews](#) shoes and shoe covers. Set an example for your employees by wearing appropriate PPE, when necessary.

TIPS FOR PURCHASING APPROPRIATE FOOTWEAR

- Buy the correct footwear for the job. Shoes should be closed at the heel and toe, without any holes.
- Shop for footwear later in the day. Feet tend to swell as the day progresses.
- Bring along the socks you expect to wear with the footwear, as well as any insoles or orthotic supports.
- Make sure the footwear fits snugly around your ankle and foot, with room for your toes to move around, and that the heels don’t slip.



RESOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Here is a list of forms, checklists and other documents that you can download and customize for your facility (in the order of appearance in this guide). Click on each link to download.

- [Hospitality Safety Calculator](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Program Template](#)
- [What Is a Risk Assessment?](#)
- [What Causes Slips and Trips](#)
- [Risk Assessment Tool](#)
- [Slips and Trips: The Importance of Floor Cleaning](#)
- [Physical Demands Job Analysis](#)
- [Job Description](#)
- [Pre-screening Questions](#)
- [Reference Check Questions](#)
- [WorkSafeBC Sample Worker Orientation Checklist](#)
- [Best Practices for Slips, Trips, and Falls](#)
- [Monthly Inspection checklist](#)

Business Planning Toolkit

The [Business Planning Toolkit](#) is an online tool that helps employers develop health and safety programs. The toolkit helps determine how much injuries are costing you and provides ideas on how to reduce injuries and lower claims costs. It also allows you to compare your stats with other companies in your industry.

Contact information

The following organizations provide tools and resources that you can use to develop or enhance your organization's injury prevention program:

- [Employers' Advisers Office](#)
- [WorkSafeBC](#)
- [go2HR](#)

go2HR provides the resources you need to succeed

go2HR, the BC tourism and hospitality industry's human resource association, is a non-profit society responsible for coordinating the BC Tourism Labour Market Strategy. This includes developing strategies to help BC tourism and hospitality businesses in recruiting, retaining, and training employees, thus supporting the growth and success of the tourism industry.

Working in partnership with WorkSafeBC, go2HR is also the health and safety resource and the certifying partner for the Certificate of Recognition (COR) Program for BC's tourism and hospitality industry.

Acknowledgments

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