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SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS PROCEDURE

The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) requires employers to evaluate and control risks, to which employees and others may be exposed. This includes potential risks from hazards present in the physical environment that may cause a person to slip, trip or fall.

This Procedure outlines the potential risks of slips, trips and falls for employees, service users etc., on Public Health Wales premises. It looks at risk assessment and the responsibilities of employees within the Trust.

This Procedure outlines the Trust's requirement to assess the risks associated with slips, trips and falls and to make provision for suitable controls designed to remove or reduce the risk of harm occurring.

Supporting Procedures and Written Control Documents

[All corporate policies and procedures are available on the Public Health Wales website](#)

This Procedure supports the Health and Safety Policy, Adverse Weather Conditions/Transport Distribution Policy, Infection Control Policy, Lone Working Procedure, Control of Contractors Procedure, Waste Management Policy & Procedure.

Scope

This procedure and any arrangements made under it applies to:

- All persons employed or engaged by Public Health Wales, including hosted bodies, part time workers, temporary and agency workers, those holding honorary contracts and those engaged by the NHS Wales Health Collaborative and Finance Delivery Unit
- All contractors, service users, visitors and volunteers

Equality, Health and Welsh Language Impact Assessment

An Equality, Welsh Language and Health Impact Assessment has been completed and can be viewed on the policy webpages.

Approved by

Health and Safety Group

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Disclaimer

If the review date of this document has passed please ensure that the version you are using is the most up to date either by contacting the document author or the [Board Business Unit](#)

Summary of reviews/amendments			
Version Number	Date of Review Approved	Date Published	Summary of Amendments
2	27/06/23	11/10/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded those in scope of Procedure • Updated objectives section • Updated responsibilities section to include specific roles within the Trust. • Amended training section • Added working at height section • Updated monitoring compliance section to include reference to health & safety audits • Added Retention and Archiving section • updated non-conformance section • added guidance and referencing section
1	10/09/19	25/11/19	New procedure

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1 Introduction

The Trust has statutory obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc., Act 1974 to ensure a safe working environment. The Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations, require any floor surface to be suitable for its purpose and kept free from hazards or obstructions, which may cause a person to slip, trip and fall.

This Procedure applies to all employees (permanent, temporary, agency or locum) visitors and any others who enter the Trust, in clinical and non-clinical environments and applies to all premises under the control of the Trust.

The Trust is committed to preventing or minimising the risk of slips, trips and falls to anyone who visits or uses our premises. It aims to do this by:

- providing a safe working environment which, as far as is reasonably practicable, is free from hazards that contribute to falls
- ensuring any slip and trip hazards in the workplace are identified, reported and rectified
- ensuring, where deficiencies are identified, appropriate risk assessments and risk reduction action plans are in place to reduce falls and ensure the best practice principles are applied

The main causes of slip, trips and falls as reported on the Health and Safety Executive website are due to obstruction in walkways and uneven surfaces.

This Procedure outlines the Trust's requirement to assess the risks associated with slips, trips and falls and to make provision for suitable controls designed to remove or reduce the risk of harm occurring.

2 Procedure aim

The aim of this procedure is to set out the measures required to ensure that the risks of slips, trips and falls in the workplace are identified and that appropriate control measures are in place to reduce the risk of incidents occurring. Definitions of slips, trips and falls are included in Appendix 1.

3 Objectives

The main objective of this procedure is to ensure the Trust has clear and defined arrangements in place for:

- The identification of slips, trips and falls hazards
- The carrying out of suitable and sufficient risk assessments on slips, trips and falls hazards
- The regular review of those risk assessments
- The management and control of the risks from slips, trips and fall hazards

4 Roles and Responsibilities

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has specific accountability to ensure that responsibilities for Health and Safety, including the management of slips, trips and falls is effectively assigned, accepted and managed at all levels in the Trust, consistent with good practice. This duty is delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Operations and Finance.

Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Operations and Finance

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Operations and Finance has delegated responsibility for the successful implementation, management and monitoring of this procedure.

Head of Estates, Health and Safety

The Head of Estates, Health and Safety has responsibility for ensuring that premises in the control of the Trust are safe and do not present a hazard to Trust staff and others using the premises. This includes safe maintenance of Trust premises to reduce the risk of injury from slips, trips and falls.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Estates, Health and Safety to ensure that contractors work in an agreed safe manner which avoids creating slip, trip and fall hazards which may pose a risk both to themselves and others.

Suitable methods of cleaning premises must be used that do not create additional risks. Some of the above duties are delegated to other managers in Estates Facilities and Safety Team.

Health & Safety Advisor and Managers

The Health and Safety Advisor and Managers will assist the Trust in undertaking the measures needed to comply with relevant statutory provisions as required by the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations. This will include the provision of relevant health and safety information and advice and review of this policy.

The Health and Safety Advisor is also responsible for providing reports on all workplace falls for discussion and consideration at the Health & Safety Group.

Health & Safety Group

The Health and Safety Group is responsible for:

- Setting the strategic aims and targets for the reduction of slips, trips and falls in the workplace
- Monitoring all staff accidents, incidents and near misses, including those events and claims relating to slips, trips and falls
- Escalating risks for discussion and potential inclusion on the appropriate risk register

Managers and Supervisors

All managers are responsible for ensuring their staff read, understand and adhere to this procedure. Additionally, they have specific responsibility to ensure that:

- Any potential slip, trip or fall related hazards within their areas of responsibility or control are identified
- Any required risk assessments for falls or falls from height are undertaken
- Measures to control any identified risks are implemented immediately
- Any risks for which the controls cannot be immediately implemented or controlled locally are reflected on DATIX until a point where controls become effective
- Equipment is promptly removed which is deemed not safe or suitable for purpose
- Any actions identified from falls incidents or near misses are implemented
- All articles are stored in designated areas

- They raise awareness in relation to the management of slips, trips and falls
- Training requirements are identified across their area of practice in line with the Training Needs Analysis and ensuring that staff complete required training.

All Staff

All Staff have the following responsibilities:

- To make themselves fully aware of the policy and to abide by it
- To take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions
- To co-operate with the Trust in relation to the completion of any risk assessment on the work they carry out for the Trust
- To notify their manager of any work-related problems they are experiencing whilst carrying out their work for the Trust; and if it cannot easily be resolved to report any health and safety related concerns using the Trust's incident reporting system, Datix
- To report any incidents and near misses arising from the carrying out of their work using the Trust's incident reporting system, Datix. This includes reporting any slips, trips and falls incidents or near misses involving either themselves or service users. It also includes reporting any damage or defects to flooring in Trust premises and any damage or defects to equipment or their clothing that could potentially result in a slip, trip or a fall
- To adhere to any safety measures that have been put in place to ensure their safety, including any safe systems of work or safe operating procedures
- To keep their areas of work tidy and free from any items that could cause a slip, trip or fall, where possible.

Contractors

All contractors working for the Trust must take precautions in line with this procedure, the Trust's Health and Safety policy and Control of Contractors Procedure as well as all health and safety law, regulations and guidance.

5 Training requirements

The awareness of slips, trips and falls, as well as teaching the principles of risk assessment should be covered during training sessions, which have been identified by a Training Needs Analysis, as

well as staff health & safety induction and mandatory health and safety training for managers.

Additional refresher and more specialist training, such as for clinical staff providing screening services, should be provided on a needs basis to establish and maintain suitably competent persons.

6 Risk Assessment

In line with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations, the Trust is required to assess the workplace for slip, trip and fall hazards and outline the control measures in place to ensure the risks of injury are removed or kept as low as possible.

Risk assessment is about taking sensible measures to control slip, trip and fall risks e.g. by using doormats to prevent water being walked in from outside.

Staff must consider what risks may lead to slip or trip injuries and decide what suitable and effective control measures will prevent these types of incidents and put them into practice, without creating a new risk through those control measures. In addition, staff should concentrate on the real risks – those that are most likely to cause harm and consider how incidents could happen and who might be harmed.

Before risk assessing the potential for slips and trips it is important to understand the factors that can cause them. These could include people and organisational factors and consideration is required for how work is organised and managed.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) state that most accidents that happen in the workplace are from slips. Therefore, when assessing the risks, special consideration should be given to the following pedestrian slip risk factors described by the HSE:

- Clear up all spills (liquid, powder, solids) immediately, if possible
- Follow cleaning regimes, barrier off areas being cleaned, display hazard warning signs in the immediate area
- If possible, undertake cleaning activities out of hours
- Ensure all entrances have suitable mats in place
- Inspect all pedestrian walkways for damage and flooding, sign hazard while repairs are awaited and undertaken.
- Grit/salt entrance ways in icy conditions

Any risks identified should be reported by staff to their respective Line Manager and they must inform the Estates and Health and Safety Division as soon as possible.

Significant risks must be recorded onto Datix to ensure they are reflected in the risk register.

7 Working at Height

'Work at height' means work in any place where, if no precautions are taken, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury (for example a fall through an opening or fragile roof). It remains one of the biggest causes of fatalities and major injuries, with common cases including falls from ladders and through fragile surfaces.

Therefore, all work at height must be properly planned and organised, and those involved in working at height must be competent. A suitable and sufficient risk assessment must be carried out and appropriate work equipment must be selected and used. The risk of anyone falling through fragile surfaces must also be properly controlled. Before any working at height takes place at the organisations premises, a suitable and sufficient Permit to Work must be issued.

Factors to weigh up include the height of the task, the duration and frequency, and the condition of the surface being worked on.

Before working at height work through these simple steps:

- avoid work at height where it's reasonably practicable to do so
- where work at height cannot be easily avoided, prevent falls using either an existing place of work that is already safe or the right type of equipment
- minimise the distance and consequences of a fall, by using the right type of equipment where the risk cannot be eliminated

8 Record Keeping

Directorates and Divisions (where relevant) should keep records of cleaning schedules and inspections and ensure they are available. Checks should be undertaken to ensure working practices and processes are being carried out properly, e.g. smooth floors are not left wet. Records should be kept in relation to:

- Cleaning and inspection, who carried out the activity and when

- Gritting including who carried out the activity, where and when.

9 Monitoring compliance

The effectiveness of the Procedure will be monitored via the analysis of slip, trip and fall incidents and near misses, RIDDOR reported incidents, complaints and corporate claims, and reported through the Quarterly and Annual Health and Safety Reports.

Compliance with this procedure will be monitored through the annual Health and Safety audits, specifically the implementation of Risk Assessments across the estate as well as the regular reviews of these Risk Assessments.

This procedure will be subject to review in line with health and safety legislation or if there are changes to technology, processes or practice. This will also be based on the prioritisation of risk within the Trust and as a consequence of any serious incidents.

10 Following a Slip, Trip or Fall

Following a slip, trip or fall, if the person has been injured an Incident Report Form will need to be completed on Datix as soon as possible after the incident.

If an incident is RIDDOR reportable, the Health and Safety Manager/Advisor and Head of Estates, Facilities and Safety must be contacted as soon as possible. Any actions identified by the investigation will need to be completed to prevent re-occurrence.

Any accidents or near misses are to be reported promptly on Datix so that the information can be used to ensure preventative actions are put in place to avoid future accidents.

11 Retention and Archiving

In cases of complaints, claims and other legal processes it is often necessary to demonstrate the policy/procedure in place at the time of the investigation of the incident. Copies of records and procedures are archived and stored in line with the Corporate Records Management Policy and are made available for reference purposes should the situation arise.

12 Non-Compliance with Procedure

Disciplinary action under the terms of Public Health Wales disciplinary policy will be taken against any member of staff, regardless of position, who shows wilful disregard with the terms of this procedure. Where a total disregard affects the health or safety of themselves or that of any other employees, the employee may be dismissed, following an investigation and disciplinary hearing, in line with the disciplinary policy.

13 Guidance and References

- The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Manual Handling Regulations 1992 (Amended 2015)
- The Working at Height Regulations 2005 (Amended 2007)
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1992 (Amended 1998)
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013.
- INDG225 - Preventing slips and trips at work

Appendix 1:

Definitions

Slip: To slide accidentally causing the person to lose their balance. This either is corrected or causes a person to fall.

Trip: People trip when they catch their foot on something or stumble accidentally over an obstacle or change in surface level, causing the person to lose their balance. This either is corrected or causes a person to fall.

Fall: An event, which results in the person coming to rest on the ground or another surface lower than the person, whether or not an injury is sustained.

Appendix 2:

Causes and Prevention of Slips and Trips

Slips rarely happen on clean, dry floors. Floors are usually only slippery when they are contaminated with liquid, bodily fluids, oil, dust, powder etc. It is therefore important to eliminate the risk in the first place. If this is not possible, prevent contamination from becoming deposited on surfaces and if this is not possible, limit the effects of contamination.

Causes of Slips	Prevention, actions or control
Environmental Factors	
Slippery or wet surfaces due to contamination of the floor from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• spillages of solids or liquids• wet cleaning methods• dry contamination, e.g. dusts, powders, polythene bags left on floors, product spillages or cardboard laid over spills• condensation, e.g. from poor ventilation• natural contamination such as wet, and/or mud in outside areas• wind-driven rain, sleet and snow through doorways	Maintaining equipment to prevent leakage <ul style="list-style-type: none">• installing suitable entrance matting systems• putting up effective entrance canopies Limit the effects of contamination by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• cleaning up spillages immediately, leaving the floor dry where possible• prompt repair of leaks• limiting the area of contamination• restricting access to contaminated areas• using dry methods for cleaning floors• clean and dry incoming footwear, by use of suitable entrance matting• using warning signs to identify contaminated floors or floors after cleaning
Steps / Stairs	Ensure that consideration is given to individuals with sensory impairment to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• steps or stairs have adequate foot and

	<p>handholds with good handrails, clearly visible nosings, and suitable balustrades</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any applied slip-resistant nosing does not create a tripping or heel-catch hazard • any changes in level are highlighted, particularly at single steps • lighting is adequate so changes can be easily identified • signage is accessible to highlight any changes in the environment (e.g. wet floor, damaged step).
Changes in floor levels such as unmarked ramps or slopes	<p>Try to avoid sudden changes of level. If this is not possible ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changes in level are highlighted, particularly at the top and bottom of ramps • sudden changes in levels are removed if possible or ensure that there are good visual signs for changes in floor level and surface • improve lighting and visibility • hand rails are provided where applicable • floor markings are used • slopes are gradual • signage is accessible to highlight any changes in the environment (e.g. wet floor, slopes, step etc.). <p>Where required, the Trust will seek advice from relevant organisations on sensory impairment.</p>

Uneven / damaged surfaces e.g. holes	<p>Eliminate holes or uneven surfaces which could cause trips. Inspect and maintain floors so they have a consistent surface finish with no holes to cause a tripping hazard</p> <p>Ensure;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lighting levels and placement of light fittings are sufficient to ensure more even lighting of all floor areas and allow for obstructions to be seen • environmental demands do not distract attention from the floor condition • smoke or steam are eliminated or controlled by redirecting away from risk areas, improve ventilation and warn of it
<p>Adverse environmental conditions hiding the condition of the floor and distracting attention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low light levels or glare • shadows • the use of repeating patterns on floor coverings that might be distracting to the eye, for example, by disguising a change in level • smoke, steam obscuring view 	<p>Ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lighting levels and placement of light fittings are sufficient to ensure more even lighting of all floor areas and permit obstructions to be seen • environmental demands do not distract attention from the floor condition • smoke or steam are eliminated or controlled by redirecting away from risk areas, improve ventilation and warn of it
Individual Factors	
<p>Unsafe actions by individuals, due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rushing • carrying items which 	<p>Supervise and monitor physical controls to see safe practices are followed</p> <p>Managers may need to take</p>

<p>prevent a hazard being seen on the floor - if balance is adversely impacted individuals are more likely to fall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being distracted by talking to others or on the phone so that the individual fails to note flooring condition and or environmental conditions • carelessness • poor knowledge of risks and measures • poor health and safety information 	<p>into consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor eyesight • fatigue • physical frailty or disability • sensory impairment
<p>The nature of the task being carried out such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the need to carry, lift, push, lower or pull loads • the need to turn, to move quickly or to take long strides • distractions • having no hands free to hold on to handrails to stop a fall • restricted vision or sensory impairment • the nature of the task creating obstructions • a safety culture which is not supportive, i.e. where risks are accepted as part of the job 	<p>Analyse the tasks and process flows in any slip or trip risk area - tasks should not compromise the ability to work safely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • see if work can be handled to eliminate or minimise obstructions • establish a positive attitude that trips can be prevented • review the way that staff work and the areas in which they operate – are floors tidy, is there adequate storage space?
Footwear	
<p>Footwear can cause a slip or trip hazard due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sole material and pattern • size of heel • type of shoe • fit • contamination of shoes (dust, liquid, ice) 	<p>Appropriate footwear should be worn for the work environment and as per the uniform policies or personal protective equipment requirements (where applicable).</p>

Obstructions	
Temporary or permanent, e.g. accumulation of articles such as trolleys, wheelchairs, medical equipment, waste	<p>Eliminate materials likely to obstruct walkways and therefore lead to trips. For example, analyse workflows and design processes so waste and equipment does not accumulate on walkways. Where possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide sufficient and suitable storage • mark out walkways, working areas and make sure they are kept free of obstructions • ensure there are suitable and clear walkways through the workplace • keep walkways clutter free • consideration is given to sensory impairment
Trailing cables	<p>Position equipment to avoid cables crossing pedestrian routes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use cable covers to securely fix to surfaces • restrict access to prevent contact • consider use of cordless tools and equipment • remember that contractors also need to be managed
Miscellaneous rubbish	<p>Keep areas clear, remove rubbish and do not allow to accumulate.</p>
Rugs or mats	<p>Ensure that mats are securely fixed and ensure edges and corners are not curling.</p>

Footwear can play an important part in preventing slips or trips. Where floors cannot be kept clean and dry, slip-resistant footwear can help prevent slip accidents. Employees must wear footwear, which is appropriate to the environment in which they work.

The All Wales NHS Dress Code states that footwear worn in the clinical areas should be suitable for purpose and comply with the

relevant health and safety requirements, for example, soft soled for reduced noise, low heeled for manual handling and ease of movement, and closed toes for protection against spills.