



**Veterinary loss prevention program:
Slips, trips, and falls in the veterinary setting.**



Slips, trips, and falls in the veterinary setting.

Trainer's overview

To help your employees get the most out of their training sessions, it is suggested that:

- The training sessions should be conducted in a relatively quiet and uninterrupted environment.
- The sessions should be held the same time and day of the month (e.g., first Tuesday at 12:30 p.m.).
- Employee handouts should be provided along with writing utensils.
Review the trainers guide, employee handout, and any references.
- The sessions are kept to a maximum of 20 minutes.
Give personal examples of incidents or prevention techniques that worked for you.
- Ensure all employees who in attendance sign the Safety Training Sign-in Sheet for documentation purposes.
- If some employees were not present, a second training session should be given.

Trainer's guide

Background

Slips, trips, and falls are the third leading cause of injury to businesses every year. The National Safety Council estimates that workers' compensation claims for slip and fall accidents cost American businesses over \$13 billion annually, with the average total incurred cost being over \$48,575'.

Slips, trips, and falls are one of the major causes of injury in the veterinary hospital environment. Slips, trips, and falls can result in back, elbow, shoulder, hip, and head injuries. Injuries can be minor, but many injuries can be major, including the possibility of fatalities. Both employees and clients walking or carrying pets are especially at risk of injury.

' National Safety Council Injury Facts 2021 Edition

Who is at risk?

Slip, trip, and fall prevention involves everything from training and education to the investigation of future flooring materials. When updating the flooring materials, ensure that the material has a proper coefficient of friction for its area of use.

Cleaning and waxing the floors can also contribute to a more slippery surface. Ask your janitorial supply firm for some recommendations on floor waxes.

During inclement weather, proper mats should be placed inside (and sometimes outside) of all exterior doors. Ensure that these mats are changed regularly, cleaned properly and that the edges are not curling.

It is always suggested that a daily walk-through is performed, just to ensure that something has not changed.

Train all employees in slip, trip, and fall safety. This training should be documented.

The following are some specific items that should be considered:

- Establish guidelines for employees to either clean up or report any potential problem areas after placing "Wet floor" signs where appropriate. Be sure employees know where 'wet floor' signs are located. Walking over a problem is not acceptable behavior.
- Pay particular attention to areas that are frequented by clients, including parking lot areas. When there is "pet accident," the area should be cleaned immediately. Be sure employees know where cleaning materials are located.

Contact us today to learn more. [safehold.com](https://www.safehold.com)

Slips, trips, and falls in the veterinary setting.

Who's at risk? (continued)

It is best for employees to wear shoes with non-slip soles. Most major department stores and online stores have shoes that are labeled as non-slip – look for the label.

In conducting a walk-through specifically looking for unsafe slip, trip, and fall areas, the following should be included:

- Electrical cords, phone cords, computer cords and cables, office supplies on the floor, pipes, and other similar items should be removed or relocated.
- Flooring surface height differences, either higher or lower, are areas that should be fixed or well-marked so that someone does not trip. These hazards often occur at thresholds.
- Loose or damaged floor tiles should be identified and repaired.
- Carpet that has ripples, tears, or is coming loose also should be repaired.
- Parking lot potholes and uneven surfaces due to items such as tree roots or cracks should be identified and repaired.
- Ensure that all parking lot lighting is working.
- Parking barriers need to be well-marked and maintained.
- Replace gutter grates that are missing, both inside and outside.
- Don't have employees carry items so large they obstruct their view - use handcarts. Slips, trips, and falls are a major source of injury to employees and clients.
- If there are stairs, ensure that any non-slip tape used is not missing or curling up.
- Are "Caution, wet surface" signs or cones available?
- Ensure that all lighting is working well, especially around stairways.

Why do slips and falls occur?

A slip occurs when there is too little friction between the sole of a person's footwear and the walking surface. This results in a failure of grip or traction, forcing the individual off his center of gravity and a loss of balance. If balance is lost, a fall may occur.

Trip hazards occur when there are unexpected changes in elevation, sometimes as small as one to six inches, and a person's foot is momentarily caught or impeded leading to a loss of balance and resulting in a stumble or fall. These incidents are always embarrassing and sometimes lead to serious injuries.

Slips, trips, and falls in the veterinary setting.

Resources

Prevention of Slips, Trips, and Falls - Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety:

http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/safety_haz/falls.html

Slips, Trips, and Falls Prevention - NOVA Southern University. <http://www.nova.edu/risk/policies/forms/slips-trips-fall-prevention.pdf>

Power Point on Slip, Trip, and Fall Prevention -- Dept. of Human Resource Managers, State of Virginia.

<http://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/workerscomp/presentations>

Questions for discussion

Who is responsible to clean up a spill?

The person who created it or anyone who sees it. It is everyone's responsibility.

If a spill is cleaned up but the floor is still wet, what should be done?

Cones or wet floor signs should be placed to warn people.

Please complete the sign-in sheet.

Employee handout

Safety tips

- Slips, trips, and falls are a major source of injury to employees and clients in the veterinary hospital environment.
- Identifying, reporting, or better yet fixing slip, trip, and fall hazards are everyone's responsibility.
- When there is a "pet accident" or liquid spill, it needs to be addressed immediately.

Always use a caution sign or cone when appropriate.

- Electrical cords, computer cables, or telephone cords draped through a walkway or office area are significant trip and fall hazards.
- Look for loose or damaged floor tiles or carpet problems.
- Problems in the parking lot such as burned-out lights and potholes need to be reported. Parking barriers need to be well-marked and maintained.
- Don't carry large items that obstruct your view--use a cart.
- Walking or carrying pets significantly increases the risk of injury.

Ensure that floor mats don't have curled edges or are flipped over.

