

# Slips, Trips and Falls Toolkit

Prepared by Allianz and APM WorkCare



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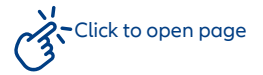
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# Introduction

Slips, trips, and falls are among the most common causes of workplace injuries, consistently ranking in the top three mechanisms of serious incidents across Australian industries.

In 2023-24, these incidents accounted for over 30,000 serious work-related injuries, representing nearly a quarter of all such cases. The human and economic costs are significant, impacting not only the wellbeing of employees but also productivity, morale, and operational efficiency.<sup>1</sup>

This toolkit has been developed to support employers in proactively identifying, managing, and mitigating the risks associated with slips, trips, and falls. It provides practical guidance, evidence-based strategies, tools and templates to help create safer work environments.

## Reference

<sup>1</sup>Safe Work Australia. (2024). Key Work Health and Safety Statistics Australia 2024. Retrieved October 21, 2025, from <https://data.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/insights/key-whs-statistics-australia/latest-release>.

From understanding the root causes – such as poor lighting, uneven surfaces, or inadequate footwear – to implementing effective risk controls, this resource is designed to empower employers to lead a culture of safety.

By using these resources and taking a structured approach to hazard identification, risk assessment, and control implementation, employers can play a pivotal role in reducing incidents, improving employee wellbeing, and contributing to a safer, more productive workplace.



# Background

Slips, trips and falls consistently rate in the top three injuries sustained at work. Between 2023-24 they accounted for 32,000 (21.8%) of serious work-related injuries and illnesses.<sup>1</sup>

Correctly managing workplace risks would have a significant impact on the Australian economy. In the absence of work-related injuries and illnesses, on average each year Australia's economy would be \$28.6Bn larger, 185,500 additional full-time equivalent jobs would be created, and workers across all occupations and skill levels would benefit from an average wage rise of \$1.3%.<sup>1</sup>

Slips, trips, and falls result in tens of thousands of injuries in Australian workplaces every year. And a person does not have to be high off the ground for a fall to cause significant injuries. This toolkit defines:

- **Slips** as occurring when a person's foot loses traction with the ground surface
- **Trips** as occurring when a person unexpectedly catches their foot on an object or surface
- **Falls** as occurring from any height

## Examples of common causes of slips, trips and falls are:

- Wet or uneven flooring
- Spills of liquids or solid materials
- Poorly lit areas, especially ramps and staircases
- Sudden changes in floor surfaces e.g., joins between carpet and polished timber
- Ridges in floors or carpets
- Potholes or cracks in flooring
- Loads that obstruct vision
- Sudden changes from a wet to a dry surface
- Dusty or sandy surfaces
- Unsuitable footwear
- Loose mats or worn flooring
- Open draws
- Uncovered electrical cables
- Clutter and untidy workplaces

## Slips trips and falls can cause a range of injuries. Some of the more common injuries are:

- Soft tissue injuries such as sprains and strains
- Cuts, abrasions and bruises
- Fractures and dislocations
- Back injuries, including disc injuries

## Slips, trips and falls statistics

In 2018/19 there were 26,000 serious claims where slips, trips and falls were the mechanism of injury. Of the 26,000, 10,785 were women and 15,210 were men. This constituted 23% of the 114,435 serious claims.<sup>1</sup>

Over time, slips, trips, and falls have consistently accounted for approximately 20% to 25% of serious injury claims. In the 2022-2023 financial year, they were the mechanism of injury in 21.9% of serious claims – defined as injuries resulting in one or more weeks off work – making them the second most common cause of serious injury. This percentage equates to approximately 30,300 serious injury claims during that period.

Within those claims injured workers lost a median of 8.8 weeks and a median cost \$16,600.<sup>1</sup>



# How to identify and assess risks in the workplace

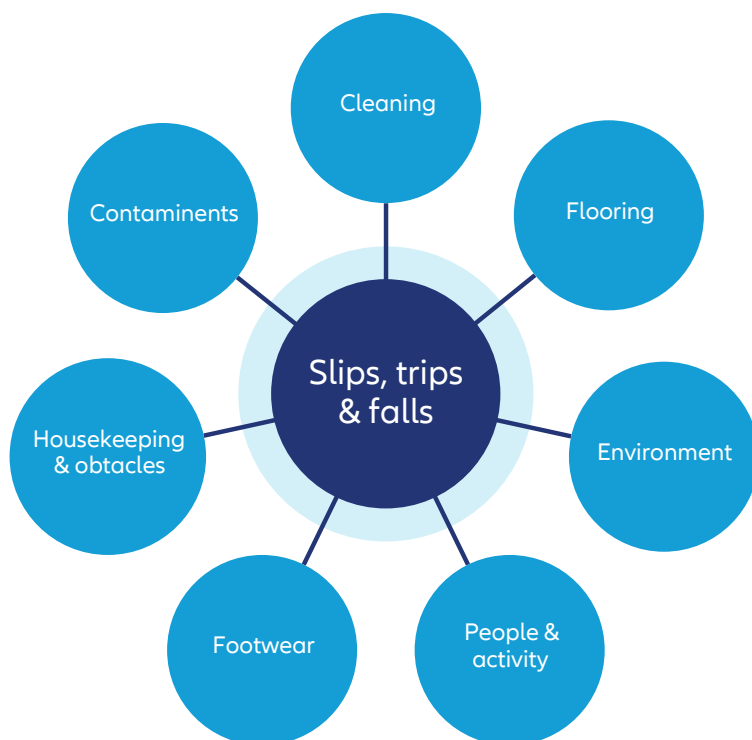
Identifying risks in the workplace is the first step in being able to manage them. Slips, trips, and falls are no different. Talking to your employees and encouraging an environment where employees will report risk and know that something will happen is important.

Having regular site inspections can be useful in documenting areas where risks may occur, monitoring the area for changes and assessing the risk for injury. Once risks are identified and recorded using a Hazard Identification Checklist and Register (see Hazard Register in appendix), the next step is to assess the risk. This comes down to three main questions:

1. How many people are exposed to the risk?
2. How often does the incident occur?
3. What are the consequences if someone does have a slip, trip, or fall?

Confirming the incidence of risks causing injuries can be completed by reviewing injury registers, workers' compensation records, as well as injury incidence at an industry level. Once this information is gathered, a risk matrix can be developed to be able to document and assess the risk using a risk assessment calculator and matrix (see Risk Assessment Process and Management Review Checklists in appendix).

**Examples of common factors causing slips, trips, and falls are:**



**Figure 1:** Worksafe Queensland. Risk management – Slips, trips and falls. Retrieved October 29, 2025, from <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/safety-and-prevention/hazards/workplace-hazards/slips-trips-and-falls/risk-management>.

# Your role in identifying risks in the workplace

As the saying goes, **safety is everyone's responsibility**. That means we all play a role in identifying and reporting hazards – especially those that could lead to slips, trips, or falls.

Sometimes, it's as simple as placing a warning sign where water has been spilled, notifying the cleaning staff, or mopping it up yourself. Small actions like these can prevent serious accidents.

Other times, safety means making smart choices for ourselves. Wearing appropriate footwear for your environment is essential. For example, high heels may not be suitable if you're walking long distances or frequently using stairs. Likewise, ensuring your non-slip shoes are in good condition can be the difference between staying upright and taking a fall.

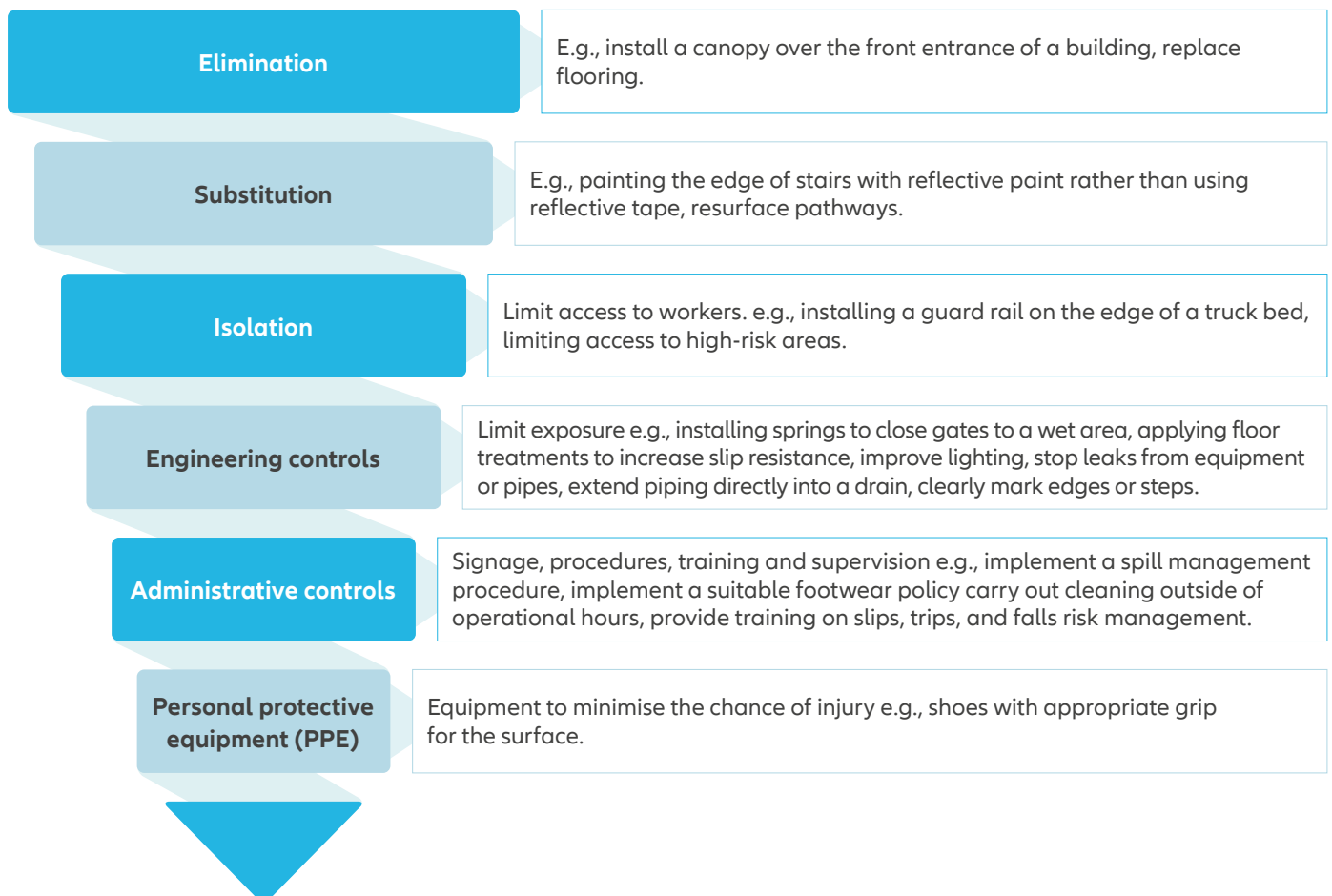
Planning how you carry out tasks can also reduce risk. If you're carrying items that block your view of the ground, your chances of tripping increase significantly. Taking smaller loads – even if it means more trips – can help prevent injury. And if you see a colleague struggling with a heavy load, offering help can make all the difference.

Ultimately, keeping ourselves, our coworkers, and our customers safe is a shared responsibility. If you see a hazard, speak up. A safer workplace starts with awareness and action.



# Managing the risk

Once the risk has been identified the next step is establishing a management strategy. The best way to do this is to use the Risk Hierarchy. Start at the top of the hierarchy and only progress to the next step if needed.

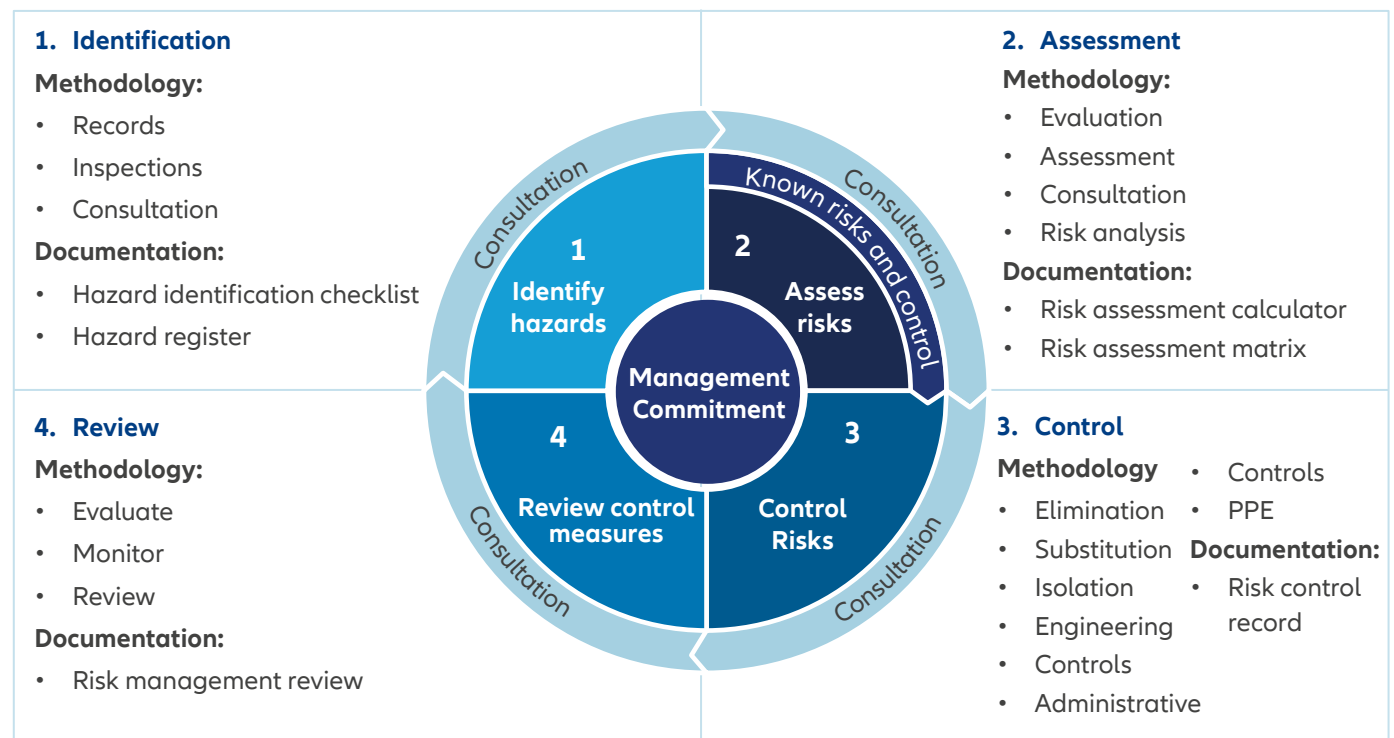
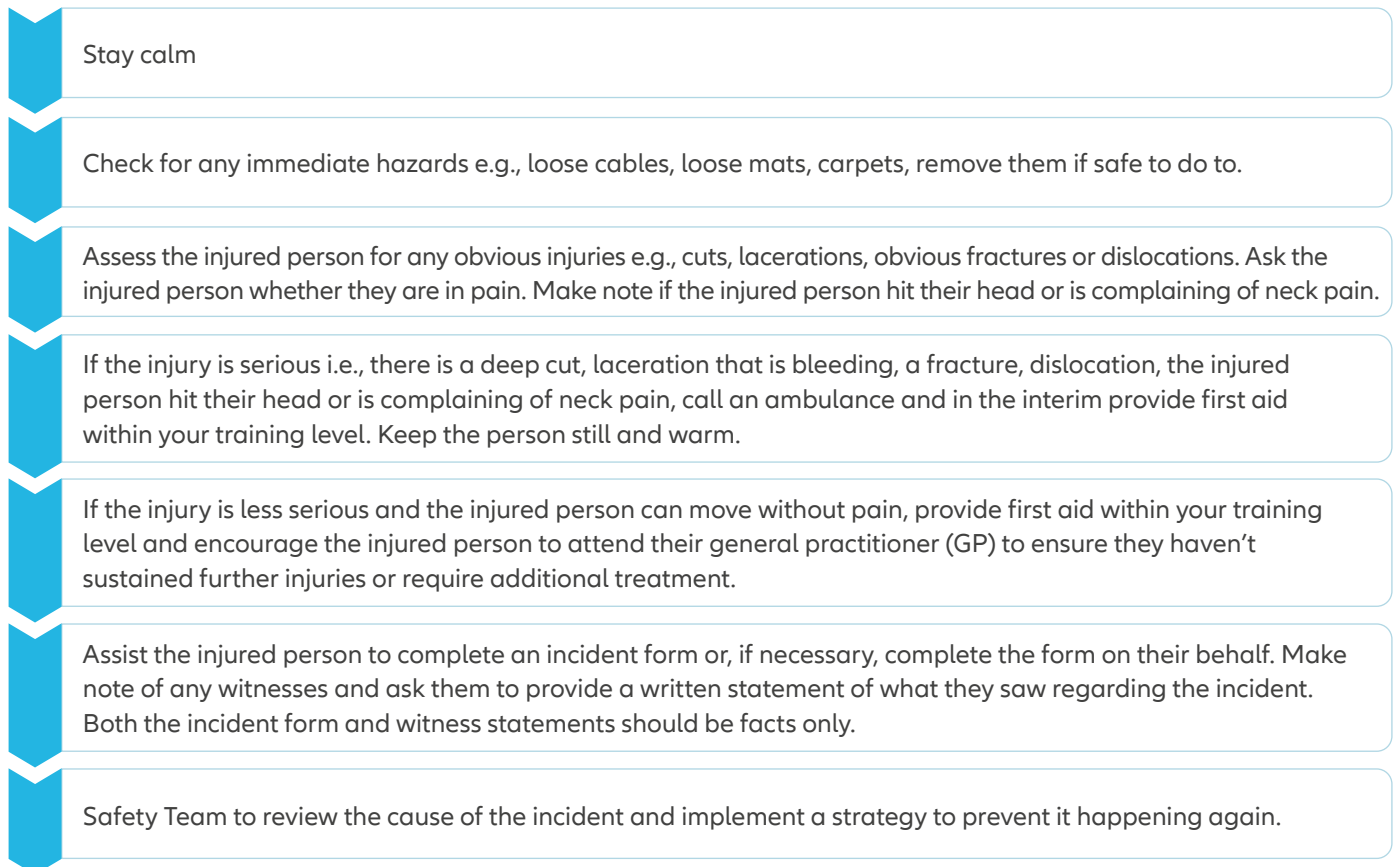


Once the strategy has been implemented and documented using a Risk Control Record (see Risk Assessment Review Checklist in appendix), it should be evaluated to make sure it reduces the risk of an incident and then monitored and reviewed to ensure it continues to do its job, which can be documented using a Risk Management Review Checklist (see Risk Management Review Checklist in appendix).



# How to manage a slip, trip or fall

The best way to address any incidents is outlined below in this flowchart:



# Tools for common risks

Tools to manage common risks can be broadly broken down into two main areas, environmental and work planning. Environmental factors can be things like:

- Suitable flooring – fit for purpose, in good repair, slip resistant coverings
- Workplace layout/circulation space – enough space to complete the task without causing a hazard
- Trip hazards – cables, loose carpet, loose tape
- Sufficient power points are available and appropriately located to avoid the need for electrical cords
- Lighting – Aus Standards – AUS/NZS1158.1 (outdoor, public spaces), AS/NZS2293 (emergency lighting, exits signs), AS2560.2:2021 (sports lighting)
- Stairs and ramps – Aus Standards (AS1657, steps) AS1428.1 (Ramps)
- Outdoor areas – uneven ground, tree roots, water that doesn't drain, loose surfaces
- Managing contaminants – cleaning procedures, weather planning, cordoning off areas where spills have occurred, and while cleaning is in process. Ensuring floors are dried following cleaning
- Sufficient storage so things aren't left in walkways
- Ensuring the workplace is clean and establishing regular cleaning schedules, and removing rubbish promptly
- Providing rubbish bins and recycling bins

- Providing non-slip mats
- Keeping access ways clear by returning tools and other items to storage areas after use
- Ensuring workers wear non-slip footwear
- Work at heights safely – use guardrails, scaffolding, and personal falls arrest systems where necessary
- Training for employees working at heights

## Work planning factors can take into account strategies such as:

- Load handling – can the person see where they are going when they are carrying things, do they have a spare hand to stop a fall?
- Additional demands
  - Environmental distractions – noise, busy areas
  - Visual distractions – flickering lights
  - Multi-tasking
  - Poor work design – causing fatigue and inattention
- Interactions of other workers and the public
- Production demands and pay incentives – does this encourage employees to rush?
- Scheduling/deliveries – coordinating parties to prevent too many people on site, availability of materials or equipment, weather and other delays, status of work tasks to allow the next task to commence



# Conclusion

Preventing slips, trips, and falls is not only a legal and ethical obligation, but also a strategic investment in your workforce and your business. By applying the insights and tools in this resource, employers can take meaningful steps to reduce incidents, protect their teams, and foster a culture where safety is a shared priority.

To support you in this effort, the following additional resources are available as an appendix.



# Appendix

## Posters

- Don't Slip into Silence
- Hazards Hide in Plain Sight
- See It. Say It. Stop It
- Speak Up. Stay Safe
- Risk Assessment

## Registers and Checklists

- Risk Assessment Process Checklist
- Risk Management Review Checklist
- Hazard Register

Every workplace is different, but the commitment to safety should be universal. With proactive leadership, consistent communication, and a focus on continuous improvement, employers can make a measurable difference – reducing injuries, improving morale, and enhancing overall productivity.

Let's work together to ensure that every step taken in the workplace is a safe one.



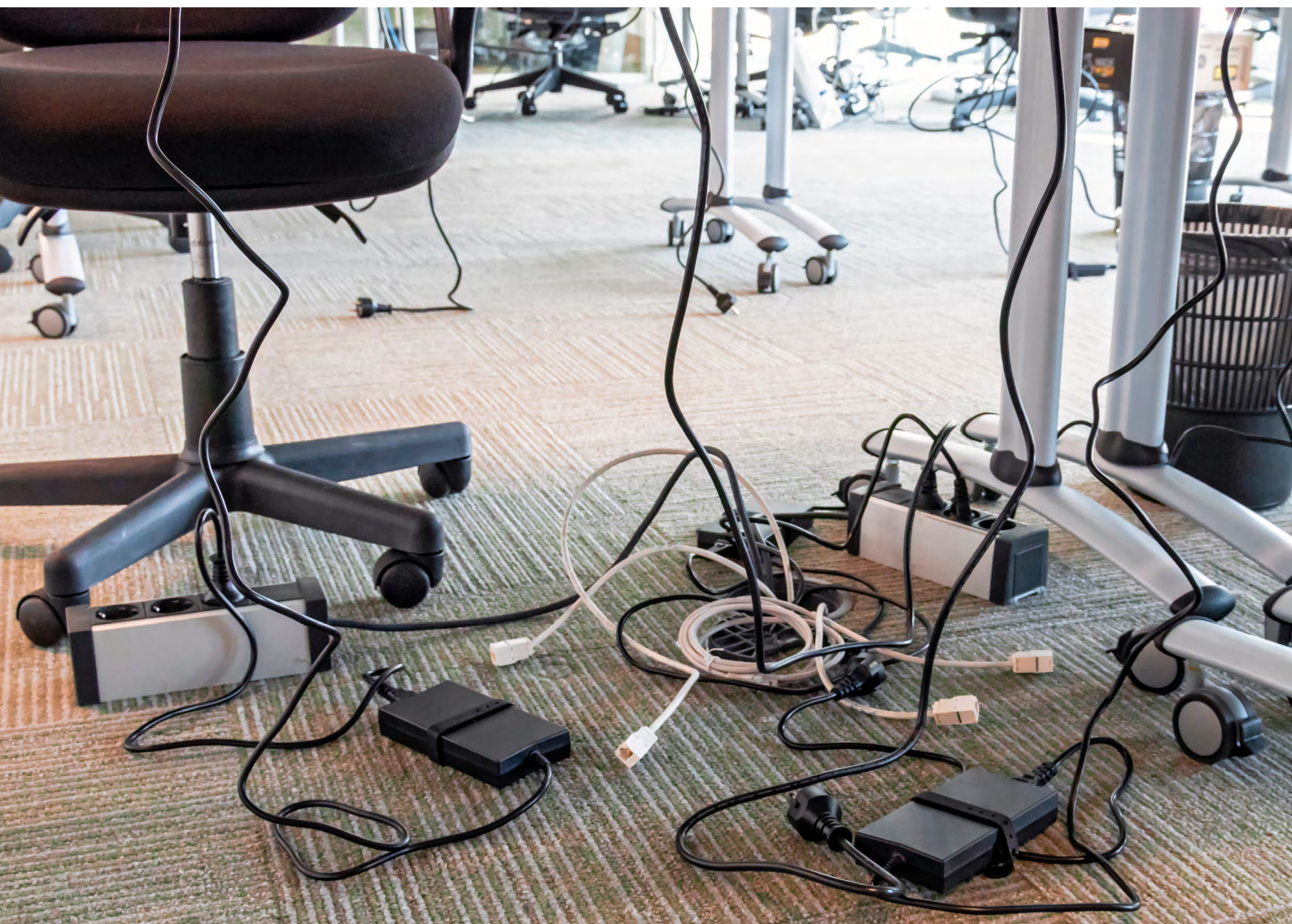
# Don't Slip into silence. Speak Up!

## Common Hazards

- Clutter and untidy workplaces
- Loads that obstruct vision
- Unsuitable footwear
- Open draws

## Take action

- Tidy up
- Check your footwear
- Report Hazards – Don't ignore them!



# Hazards Hide in Plain Sight

## Spot them, stop them!

### Common Hazards

- Poorly lit areas, especially ramps and staircases
- Wet or uneven flooring
- Spills of liquids or solid materials

### Take action

- High-viz tape at the edge of flooring
- Clean spills immediately
- Request new lights/change of light bulbs
- Report hazards – don't ignore them!



# See It. Say It. Stop It!

## Common Hazards

- Sudden changes from a wet to a dry surface
- Dusty or sandy surfaces
- Uncovered electrical cables

## Take action

- High-viz tape at the edge of flooring
- Clean spills immediately
- Secure electrical cables
- Report hazards – don't ignore them!



# Speak up. Stay safe. Save Someone.

## Common Hazards

- Wet floors
- Loose cables
- Cluttered walkways
- Uneven surfaces

## Take action

- Clean spills immediately
- Secure cords and mats
- Keep walkways clear
- Report hazards – don't ignore them!



# Risk Assessment

## Identify Risks

- Talk to employees
- Site inspections
- Review injury records

## Assess the risk

- How many people are exposed to the risk?
- How often does the incident occur?
- What are the consequences if someone has a slip, trip or fall?

## Manage the risk

- Elimination
- Substitution
- Isolation
- Engineering controls
- Administrative controls
- Personal protective equipment (PPE)

## Evaluate

- Monitor – Did the management strategy work? Has the incidence of slips, trips, and falls reduced?
- Review – Is there a better management strategy



| Risk Assessment Process Checklist                                                                                                                                                  |                            |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----|
| Division:                                                                                                                                                                          | Work area:                 |    |
| Business unit:                                                                                                                                                                     | Date prepared:     /     / |    |
| Location:                                                                                                                                                                          | Person responsible:        |    |
| Action taken                                                                                                                                                                       | Yes                        | No |
| A competent person at an appropriate management level has been appointed to take overall responsibility for the risk assessment process.                                           |                            |    |
| Employees are involved in the risk assessment process.                                                                                                                             |                            |    |
| Where necessary, specialist assistance is involved e.g., Regional OH&S managers.                                                                                                   |                            |    |
| People who will carry out risk assessment activities have been trained to the required level of competence.                                                                        |                            |    |
| Appropriate risk assessment models have been selected given the businesses' needs, available resources, the types of hazards, client requirements and the degree of risk involved. |                            |    |
| All relevant information (such as hazard identification documentation) has been considered in undertaking risk assessments.                                                        |                            |    |
| The likelihood of injury, harm or damage occurring as a result of every hazard identified has been evaluated.                                                                      |                            |    |
| The severity of potential injury, harm or damage from every hazard has been evaluated.                                                                                             |                            |    |
| The degree of exposure has been considered e.g., the number of people exposed; the frequency and duration of exposure.                                                             |                            |    |
| Priorities (risk ratings) for risk control have been assigned, based on the likelihood and severity (and exposure if the Risk Assessment Calculator is used) conclusions.          |                            |    |
| Appropriate controls have been selected taking into account the risk rating and the hierarchy of controls.                                                                         |                            |    |
| Based on the priorities (risk ratings). Time scales have been outlined within which risk controls must be implemented.                                                             |                            |    |
| Deadlines have been set for review of individual risk assessments.                                                                                                                 |                            |    |
| All relevant risk assessment documentation has been recorded and appropriately filed (e.g., risk assessment models; assessors; relevant tests).                                    |                            |    |
| Appropriate information on the results of the risk assessment process has been communicated internally to employees and contractors.                                               |                            |    |
| Information has been communicated externally where necessary (e.g., clients; emergency services).                                                                                  |                            |    |

## Risk Management Review Checklist

| <b>Division:</b>                                                                     | <b>Business unit:</b> | <b>Location:</b>            |             |                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| <b>Manager:</b>                                                                      | <b>Review team:</b>   | <b>Review date:</b> /     / |             |                 |
| Review item                                                                          | Action required       | Person responsible          | Action date | Completion date |
| 1. All hazards from the hazard register have been reviewed                           |                       |                             |             |                 |
| 2. Have additional hazards been identified since last reviewed?                      |                       |                             |             |                 |
| 3. Additional hazards have been added to the register                                |                       |                             |             |                 |
| 4. New hazards have had risk assessments carried out                                 |                       |                             |             |                 |
| 5. Controls have been identified for new hazards & entered into the Hazard Register  |                       |                             |             |                 |
| 6. Employee input has been sought                                                    |                       |                             |             |                 |
| 7. Workplace hygiene monitoring reports have been reviewed                           |                       |                             |             |                 |
| 8. Health surveillance reports have been reviewed                                    |                       |                             |             |                 |
| 9. Audit reports and site safety inspections have been reviewed                      |                       |                             |             |                 |
| 10. OH&S committee minutes have been reviewed                                        |                       |                             |             |                 |
| 11. Statutory requirements have been reviewed for changes                            |                       |                             |             |                 |
| 12. Changes to workplace activities and structure have been reviewed to check impact |                       |                             |             |                 |

|                     |                                  |                     |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Division:           | Business unit:                   | Location:           |
| Work area/Job/Task: | Date prepared:        /        / | Person responsible: |