

SLIPS, TRIPS and FALLS PREVENTION POLICY

Policy:

Community Living-Central Huron is committed to protecting the health, safety and well-being of its employees, volunteers, people supported and visitors. Slips, trips and falls are among the leading causes of injuries; therefore, it is important the Agency establish and promote practices that prevent such injuries and provide a safe and healthy workplace. In the interest of working safely, all employees, volunteers, people supported and visitors are required to follow all health and safety procedures that are related to slips, trips and falls. Non-compliance with this Policy and Procedures is subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal from Community Living-Central Huron's employment and/or services.

Purpose:

Eliminating and preventing all injuries from slips, trips and falls are the key goals of this Policy. Additional goals include: reducing injuries from slips, trips and falls; increased knowledge of hazard awareness in the workplace for the prevention of slips, trips and falls incidents and injuries and to outline safe work practices.

Common Hazards:

The following are common hazards in the workplace and can be the cause of a slip, trip or fall:

- slippery surfaces (oily or greasy);
- seasonal slip, trip and fall hazards (snow, ice, frost, hail, sleet and rain);
- wet leaves or pine needles;
- missing or uneven floor tiles, boards or bricks;
- spills of wet or dry substances (areas in bathroom or laundry, spilt powder laundry detergent);
- changes/cracked walkway and/or floor levels and slopes;
- transition of one flooring surface to another (ie. from carpet to tile floor; rough to smooth);
- unsecured mats;
- polished or freshly waxed floors;
- open desk or file cabinet drawers;
- lack of awareness of pets moving about;
- unsafe use of ladders, damaged ladder steps;
- poor/insufficient lighting;
- debris, cables or cords in walkways;
- damaged or irregular steps, no handrails;
- smoke, steam or dust obscuring view;
- lack of guardrails/handrails on balconies, steps;
- unsuitable footwear for the job being performed/damaged footwear, shoes that are wet, muddy, greasy or oily soles;
- clutter - books, laundry, footwear, etc.
- preoccupation of workers on mobile phones - talking, texting, and not paying attention to what is in front of them.
- inappropriate footwear

Definitions:

Flooring/Walking Surfaces:

Flooring/walking surfaces include floors; stairs; ramps; entrances; outside walkways and driveways.

Footwear:

To ensure that safe standards are maintained, all employees must wear safe and appropriate footwear at all times which suits the environment and the conditions of the job. Appropriate footwear is defined as: a proper-fitted shoe with a slip-resistant sole, low or medium heel that provides good stability, support and foot protection. The shoe should be closed at the heel so that the foot will not slide around. Loose fitting footwear is not appropriate at any time. In some work locations, there may be specific recommendations where additional protection is required (ie. safety shoes). In order to determine safe and appropriate footwear, each employee must have knowledge of the risks associated with the job responsibilities and select footwear based on an understanding of the hazards within the individual job tasks. Such factors include the conditions present in the work location and weather conditions. Each employee is expected to use their professional judgement in choosing footwear in keeping with the environment and the activities that are scheduled and/or could potentially occur for that day including, but not limited to: pushing someone in a wheelchair; demonstrating how to use a lawnmower; carrying groceries; walking or providing supports in wet environments or areas with water, ice, sand, gravel or snow covered.

Guidelines to Create a Safer Working Environment:

Below is a list of guidelines that assist in creating a safer working environment to avoid injuries from slips, trips and falls:

1. Create Good Housekeeping Practices:

Adopt a “clean as you go” practice in daily routine by cleaning up spills and other slipping or tripping hazards. Good housekeeping is critical; safety and housekeeping go hand in hand. Poor housekeeping habits may result in higher incidences of injury; make proper housekeeping part of the routine and daily performance. Good housekeeping includes: clean up spills immediately; mark spills and wet area; mop and sweep debris from floors; remove obstacles from walkways/keep walkways clutter free; cover cables that cross walkways; keep working areas and walkways well lit; secure mats, rugs and carpets that do not lay flat; always close file cabinets and storage drawers.

2. Reduce Wet or Slippery Surfaces:

The most frequent surfaces where slips, trips and falls occur are: parking lots; sidewalks; food preparation areas; shower stalls and floors in general. Traction on outdoor surfaces can change considerably as weather conditions change and this can then affect indoor surfaces as moisture is tracked in. Therefore to reduce slips, trips and falls: keep parking lots, sidewalks and ramps in good repair; remove ice and snow, if this is not possible, refrain from using the area until ice and snow are removed; use adhesive stripping material or anti-skid paint when possible. For indoor surfaces use moisture-absorbent mats with backing so they will not slide on the floor; display “Wet Floor” signs as needed; clean up spills immediately.

3. Avoid Creating Obstacles in Aisles and Walkways:

Injuries can result from obstacles, clutter, materials and equipment in aisles, corridors, entrances and stairwells; proper housekeeping is the most effective control measure in avoiding slips, trips and falls. Keep all work areas; passageways; storerooms and equipment rooms clean and orderly. Avoid stringing cords, cables or hoses across hallways. Avoid leaving boxes, files or brief cases in the aisles; encourage safe work practices such as closing file cabinets and drawers after use. Also conduct periodic inspections for slip, trip and fall hazards.

4. Create and Maintain Proper Lighting:

Poor lighting in a workplace is associated with an increase in accidents, therefore use proper illumination in walkways; staircases; ramps; hallways; basements; patios; garages, etc. Keep work areas well lit and clean. Upon entering a dark room, always turn on the light first and keep

areas around light switches clear and accessible. Repair light fixtures, switches and cords immediately if they malfunction.

5. Wear Proper Shoes:

The shoes we wear can play a big part in preventing slips and falls. The slickness of the soles and the type of heels worn need to be evaluated to avoid slips, trips and falls. Shoelaces need to be tied correctly. Employees are expected to wear footwear appropriate for the duties they are performing.

6. Individual Behaviour:

This condition can be the most difficult to control; it is human nature to let your guard down for two or three seconds and be distracted by music, talking, pets or doing multiple activities. Being in a hurry will result in walking too fast or running which increases the chances of a slip, trip or a fall. Taking shortcuts, not watching where you're going, using a cell phone, carrying materials which obstruct your vision, wearing sunglasses in low light are common elements in many on-the-job injuries. Each individual is responsible to stay alert, pay attention and plan ahead.

Responsibilities:

Preventing slips, trips and falls is the responsibility of everyone in the workplace. Employers are legally required to take every reasonable precaution to protect employees in the workplace, as well as inform employees about any potential job hazard. Supervisors are required to inform all employees about hazards on the job. Employees and volunteers are required to follow the policies and procedures set out by the Employer.

Employer:

The Employer will:

- take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of an employee and volunteer to avoid injuries from slips, trips and falls;
- provide and maintain equipment, materials and protective devices as prescribed;
- assess the risks in workplace for slips, trips and falls, the type of work or conditions of work and record in the Hazard/Risk Registry;
- provide orientation and training to all employees and volunteers on the prevention of slips, trips and falls;
- include measures and procedures for employees and volunteers to report incidents of slips, trips and falls to their immediate Supervisor;
- establish a procedure as to how the employer will investigate and manage incidents and complaints of workplace hazards related to slips, trips and falls;
- ensure all hazards present in the workplace are identified in the prescribed manner and are available in English and such other languages as required;
- review at least once a year the Agency's Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Procedures for the health and safety of employees and volunteers and revise based on current legislation and practice;
- review and revise measures and procedures more often than annually, if the employer and the Location Health and Safety Representatives determine necessary;
- in consultation with Location Health and Safety Representatives, develop, establish and provide training and educational programs related to prevention of slips, trips and falls for employees that are relevant to the employees' work; and
- post in the workplace a copy of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and any other materials that will assist employees and volunteers to identify hazards of slips, trips and falls and their responsibilities and duties related to such.

Supervisor:

The Supervisor will:

- advise employees and volunteers with information on the existence of any potential or actual danger and/or hazards related to slips, trips and falls and the health and safety of employees and volunteers of which the Supervisor is aware;
- provide employees and volunteers written instructions as to the measures and procedures to be taken for protection of the employee and volunteer;
- take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of the employee and volunteer against injuries from slips, trips and falls;
- conduct annual Workplace Hazard/Risk Assessments using the Agency's designated form;
- complete monthly workplace inspections;
- ensure employees and volunteers work in a safe manner and with the protective devices, measures and procedures required by the Occupational Health and Safety Act; the Health Care and Residential Facilities Regulation and the Agency's Health & Safety Policies and Procedures;
- instruct and train employees and volunteers on the guidelines for a safe working environment and the prevention of injuries from slips, trips and falls;
- educate employees and volunteers on the hazards and risks and provide written measures and procedures, as required;
- investigate all reports of health and safety hazards/risks related to slips, trips and falls;
- respond in writing to any written or verbal reports and provide written recommendations of hazards/risks/incidents related to slips, trips and falls.

Location Health and Safety Representatives:

The Location Health and Safety Representatives will:

- comply with the requirements of the work location and procedures regarding slips, trips and falls;
- participate in all training and educational programs, as determined by the Employer to be beneficial for the area of hazards and risks related to slips, trips and falls;
- encourage co-workers to work safely and to report any hazardous or unsafe conditions immediately to their Supervisor or designate using a Workplace Hazard & Suggestion Report;
- obtain from the Employer information concerning the conducting or taking of tests of any equipment, machine, device, article, thing, material or biological, chemical or physical agent in or about a workplace for the purpose of occupational health and safety;
- be consulted about and be present at the beginning of testing conducted in or about the workplace if the Representative believes his or her presence is required to ensure that valid testing procedures are used or to ensure that the test results are valid;
- obtain information from the Employer to identify potential or existing hazards related to slips, trips and falls;
- conduct and document monthly inspections of their work location and submit such to their immediate Supervisor within the designated time frame;
- identify and report situations immediately that may be a source of danger or hazard to employees and volunteers and make recommendations to their Supervisor by completing a Workplace Hazard & Suggestion Report;
- review Incident Accident Reports and make written recommendations and submit to Supervisor or designate in the time frame required;
- accompany a Ministry of Labour Inspector during an inspection visit;
- investigate work refusals;
- investigate when notified by the Employer of a critical injury/fatality and provide a report in writing to the Ministry of Labour, within forty-eight (48) hours as prescribed.

Employees:

The Employees will:

- comply with the requirements of the work location and procedures regarding slips, trips and falls;
- report to their Supervisor or designate, immediately, using a Workplace Hazard & Suggestion Report the absence of or defect in any equipment or protective device of which the worker is aware and which may endanger himself, herself or another employee or volunteer;
- report to their Supervisor or designate, immediately, using a Workplace Hazard & Suggestion Report anything that may be a hazard or risk;
- report to their Supervisor any contravention of the Occupational Health and Safety Act or Health Care and Residential Facilities Regulation or the existence of any hazard of which the employee or volunteer is aware;
- abide by safe work practices/safe operating procedures, to include but not limited to slips, trips and falls,
- take part, when requested, in a workplace inspection to advise of any hazards or risks related to slips, trips and falls; and
- participate in all training and educational programs, as determined by the Employer to be beneficial for the area of hazards and risks related to slips, trips and falls and seek any necessary clarification.

Reporting and Investigation:

It is the responsibility of all employees and volunteers to immediately report all potential risk factors for hazards/incidents to their immediate Supervisor or designate using the Employee Incident Form and/or the Workplace Hazard & Suggestion Report. The Supervisor will investigate risks/hazards /incidents as soon as possible and take appropriate steps to address any continuing risk to the health, safety and well being of all employees and volunteers. Should a hazard result in a critical injury or fatality, Supervisors, employees and Location Health and Safety Representatives will follow the Agency's Critical Injury Policy (#D-006) .

Evaluation:

Community Living-Central Huron is committed to looking at leading indicators of workplace risks and hazards of slips, trips and falls through such methods as information gathering (Workplace Inspections, Incident Investigations, Job Hazard Analysis, etc., surveys, data collection and Staff meetings.) Supervisors will regularly audit employee and volunteer practices related to hazards and risks of slips, trips and falls through such means as: monthly, periodic inspections at the work locations; documenting unsafe work practices; providing written recommendations in response to any reports of hazards/risks; reviewing monthly work location checklists completed by Location Health and Safety Representatives; and, completing annual workplace hazard/risk assessments. The Location Health and Safety Representatives will provide written recommendations to the Employer when identifying issues related to slips, trips and falls. The Agency will maintain a Hazard/Risk Registry, which will be updated annually in consultation with the Location Health and Safety Representatives, as necessary, based on the written information/documentation received by Supervisors, employees, volunteers and the Location Health and Safety Representatives.

Related Policies and Procedures:

- Usage of Agency Equipment/Electronic Communication Technologies (B-006)
- Volunteer (B-007)
- Duty of Care (B-010)
- Serious Occurrence (C-006)
- Pet Ownership, Visiting Pets and Service Animals (C-010)
- Orientation of People Supported (C-011)
- Inventory, Personal Belongings of Persons Supported (C-013)
- Bathing and Showering Supervision of Persons Supported Policy (C-014)
- Health and Safety Policy Statement D-001
- Emergency Policy D-003
- Critical Injury D-006
- Annual Workplace Maintenance Policy D-009
- Musculoskeletal Disorders Awareness Policy D-010
- First Aid Policy and Procedures D-011
- Working Alone Policy D-012
- Hazard/Risk Policy and Procedures (D-014)
- Health and Safety Orientation Policy (D-015)
- Location Health and Safety Representatives Policy (D-016)
- Ladder Safety Policy and Procedures (D-017)
- Early and Safe Return to Work E-016
- Employee and Volunteer Orientation Policy (E-005)
- Professional Development/Training Policy (E-006)
- Employee Performance Standards (E-011)
- Early and Safe Return to Work (-016)

Other Related Agency Documents:

- Community Living-Central Huron Occupational Health and Safety Document