



SLIPS AND FALL PREVENTION: WET SURFACES

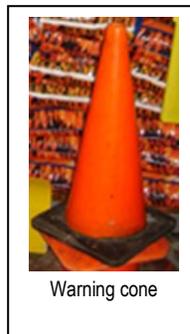
According to GuideOne Insurance, slips and falls are the number one cause of injuries, as well as liability losses. So, instead of keeping your fingers crossed that an injury will not occur, senior living communities are advised to be proactive in preventing slips and falls.

Wet surfaces, whether they're inside or outside, can pose a severe slip and fall hazard. To be proactive in preventing slips and falls from occurring on wet surfaces, appropriate policies and procedures should be developed to address various wet surface exposures, including spills, irrigation systems, inclement weather and many other sources.

INTERIOR

- ❑ Employees and volunteers should be trained to identify wet conditions and clean up spills immediately.
- ❑ Keep equipment and supplies available to deal with the wet conditions, including the following:
 - An adequate number and placement of mops and buckets.
 - Warning cones or signs that can be used to warn people of wet surfaces, slippery, or unsafe areas.
 - An adequate number of floor mats to place at entrances and other areas where wet conditions may exist.

The photos at the right are examples of the appropriate types of supplies that should be available for controlling wet conditions, including a mop and bucket, caution signs and cones to be placed in visible locations to warn of the potential slip and fall hazards from the wet conditions, and floor mats for entrances to remove moisture.



Warning cone



Mop and bucket and caution signs

Floor mat at entrance to absorb moisture

EXTERIOR

- ❑ Grading of land should be away from the building to allow for adequate drainage.
- ❑ Drainage for storm water run-off should be adequate, and blocked drains and gutters should be kept clear.
- ❑ Gutter downspouts should not drain onto walkways.
- ❑ Condensation from air conditioners should not accumulate on walkway areas.
- ❑ Growth of moss on walkways also can be present on shady walkway areas where drainage is not adequate. This moss should be eliminated.
- ❑ Excess water from lawn sprinklers also can cause pooling of water on walkways. Test the spray pattern of the sprinklers to ensure that they do not cover the walking surface and make adjustments as needed.

Protecting your organization against slips and falls from wet surfaces should be a priority. It would be frustrating to have someone become seriously injured from a slip and fall that could have been prevented. Don't wait another day to implement a policy on handling wet surfaces and to properly train your employees and/or volunteers on any new responsibilities.



This photo shows the effects of a downspout discharging water onto the sidewalk. This creates an unnecessary wet surface and has badly deteriorated the walking surface. To eliminate the slip and fall potential, route gutters away from any walking surface, and make repairs to the sidewalk surface.

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You are encouraged to consult with your own attorney or other expert consultants for a professional opinion specific to your situation.



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