

Policy No: 03-4016	Authorised: Roxane Schatara	Date:15/05/2018
SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS PREVENTION & MANAGEMENT		

Slips, trips and falls are the most common causes of injury at work, and can affect anybody within the working environment. Problems with slips, trips and falls can be exacerbated for the more elderly person (e.g. service user) who may be more frail or unsteady, and therefore more vulnerable. Assessing the risks associated with slips, trips and falls in the domestic environment, and management of these risks, is a fundamental management responsibility, and the purpose of this Policy is to describe the risks to be assessed at the service user's home:

A: LEGISLATION & DEFINITION:

1. The service user's home is defined as the "workplace" for health and safety purposes. The legislation and regulations which underpin workplace hazards such as slips, trips and falls are as follows:

- The *Health & Safety and Work Act 1974*:

This requires employers to ensure the health and safety of all employees and anyone who may be affected by their work, so far as is reasonably practical. This includes taking appropriate steps to control slip and trip risks. Conversely, employees have a Duty of Care to themselves by not putting themselves or others in harm's way, and must use any safety equipment provided (e.g. hoists, PPE).

- The *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*:

This requires employers to assess risks, including slip and trip risks, and where necessary to take action to address them.

- The *Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992*:

This requires floors to be suitable, in good condition and free from obstructions. People must be able to move around safely.

Slips and trips should not be considered as inevitable events - they can and should be prevented. This Policy will identify the control processes required for the management of slips, trips and falls at the service user's home.

2. For the purposes of this Policy the following definitions will apply:

- 2.1 SLIP - to slide accidentally causing the person to lose their balance. This is either corrected, or causes a person to fall.
- 2.2 TRIP - to stumble accidentally over an obstacle, causing the person to lose their balance. This is either corrected, or causes a person to fall.
- 2.3 FALL - an event which results in a person coming to rest on the ground or another surface lower than the person, whether or not an injury is sustained.

B: PREVENTION & MANAGEMENT OF SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS:

This part of the Policy addresses the responsibilities that care staff have in order to report on the likelihood of slips, trips or falls occurring, the main causes of slips, trips and falls, and issues that are specific to the service user which are identified through personal risk assessment (ref. *Form No: 3-004*).

1. *Staff Responsibilities:*

- 1.1 All staff members will receive appropriate training, information and instruction to enable them to employ appropriate safe systems for managing slips, trips and falls at the service user's home.

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- 1.2 The service user's home will be subject to appropriate risk assessments relating to slips, trips and falls.
- 1.3 Staff will conduct themselves and carry out their duties in such a manner so as not to create a potentially hazardous situation which may lead to a slip, trip or fall.
- 1.4 Staff will ensure that any hazard which may lead to a slip, trip or fall is reported to their Supervisor as a priority.
- 1.5 For each incident of an actual fall, or a near miss, an appropriate Report will be completed. For an actual fall an Accident Record (*Form No: 4-100*) will be completed; for a near miss the Incident & Action Log (*Form No: 2-107*) will be completed.

2. *The main causes of slips, trips and falls:*

2.1 SLIP Hazards:

- Liquid spills and splashes
- Wet floors (following cleaning)
- Rain, sleet, snow, ice
- Unsuitable footwear
- Change from a wet to a dry surface (footwear still wet)
- Unsuitable floor surface or covering (loose mats or rugs etc)
- Dusty floors
- Sloping surfaces – no handrails or high visibility floor markings

2.2 TRIP Hazards:

- Loose floor tiles or floorboards
- Loose or crumpled mats or rugs / mats or rugs with curling edges
- Uneven outdoor surfaces
- Holes and cracks
- Changes in surface level
- Cables across walking areas
- Bumps, ridges, protruding nails, and other obstructions
- Unseen obstructions due to poor lighting
- Items stored or discarded in access routes

2.3 FALL Hazards:

- Staff not properly trained in moving and handling
- Pre-existing medical condition, rendering the person unsteady / liable to lose balance
- Effects of medication, including alcohol and recreational drugs
- Physiological factors (service user - see clause 3 of this Policy for specific risk elements)
- Fatigue / distractions
- Over-reaching
- Rushing down steps or stairs
- Faulty or unsuitable equipment

3. *Service User - risk elements of falls to be assessed (refer to Form No: 3-004):*

3.1 FALLS - *Contributory factors to be considered:*

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- Previous history of falls
- Inability or unwillingness to call for assistance
- Limited mobility or movement, or unsteady gait
- Confusion, disorientation, effects of medication or other type of altered mental state

- Impaired vision / hearing / other sensory defect
- Frequency of micturition or defecation and / or incontinence
- Recent cardiovascular accident or neurological impairment

3.2 FALLS - *Identification of risk factors to be considered:*

- Visual / sight problems
- Hearing / speech problems
- Cognitive impediment
- History / fear of falls
- Limited / impaired mobility
- Urinary / faecal incontinence
- History of alcohol abuse
- History of smoking
- History of fits / seizures
- Confusion / disorientation
- Arthritis of knees / hip
- Cardiac / arterial disease
- Parkinson's Disease
- Postural hypotension
- Use of antidepressants / sedatives
- Controlled Drugs prescribed
- Peripheral neuropathy

FORMS REFERENCES:

Form No: 2-107 *Incident & Action Log*
 Form No: 3-004 *Risk Assessment - Service User - Falls & Mobility*
 Form No: 3-019 *High Risk of Falls - Service User - Care Plan Guidance Checklist*
 Form No: 3-723 *Falls History Record - Service User Audit*
 Form No: 4-100 *Accident Record*