

Occupational Hazards in Home Health Care



Slips/Trips/Falls

Potential Hazard

Employee exposure to wet floors or spills and clutter that can lead to slips/trips/falls and other possible injuries.



Possible solutions

- Keep floors clean and dry. In addition to being a slip hazard, continually wet surfaces promote the growth of mold, fungi, and bacteria, that can cause infections.
- Provide warning signs for wet floor areas.
- Where wet processes are used, maintain drainage and provide false floors, platforms, mats, or other dry standing places where practicable, or provide appropriate waterproof footwear.
- Walking/Working Surfaces Standard requires: Keep all places of employment clean and orderly and in a sanitary condition.
- Keep aisles and passageways clear and in good repair, with no obstruction across or in aisles that could create a hazard.
Provide floor plugs for equipment, so power cords need not run across pathways.
- Keep exits free from obstruction. Access to exits must remain clear of obstructions at all times.

Other Recommended Good Work Practices:

- Ensure spills are reported and cleaned up immediately.
- Use no-skid waxes and surfaces coated with grit to create non-slip surfaces in slippery areas such as toilet and shower areas.
- Use waterproof footwear to decrease slip/fall hazards.
- Use only properly maintained ladders to reach items. Do not use stools, chairs, or boxes as substitutes for ladders.
- Re-lay or stretch carpets that bulge or have become bunched to prevent tripping hazards.
- Aisles and passageways should be sufficiently wide for easy movement and should be kept clear at all times. Temporary electrical cords that cross aisles should be taped or anchored to the floor.
- Eliminate cluttered or obstructed work areas.
- Nurses station countertops or medication carts should be free of sharp, square corners.
- Use prudent housekeeping procedures such as cleaning only one side of a passageway at a time, and provide good lighting for all halls and stairwells, to help reduce accidents.
- Provide adequate lighting especially during night hours. You can use flashlights or low-level lighting when entering patient rooms.

- Instruct workers to use the handrail on stairs, to avoid undue speed, and to maintain an unobstructed view of the stairs ahead of them even if that means requesting help to manage a bulky load.
- Eliminate uneven floor surfaces.
- Promote safe work in cramped working spaces. Avoid awkward positions, and use equipment that makes lifts less awkward.

Additional Information:

- [Walking/Working Surfaces](#) Safety and Health Topics Page.
- [1910.22](#) Walking/Working Surfaces, General Requirements.
- [Walking/Working Surfaces](#) OSHA Small Business Training.