

SAFETY FOCUS

SLIPS AND TRIPS

This guide aims to highlight the risks to you from a slip or trip and provides practical advice on how you can make your farm a safer place, for you and your family, employees and any visitors.

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The Law

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires employers to ensure the health and safety of their employees and anyone who may be affected by their work, so far as is reasonably practicable. This includes taking steps to control slip and trip risks.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires employers to assess risks (including slip and trip risks) and, where necessary take action to address them.

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 requires floors to be suitable, in good condition and free from obstructions.

Considering how to reduce slips and trips may sound trivial, but in the last two years, three people have died on farm from slipping or tripping on a flat surface. Many others have suffered knocks, bumps, strains and fractures from slipping, especially in the winter months. These seemingly minor injuries can have a big effect on productivity contributing to numerous 'lost days' over the course of a year. Some injuries can be life changing and might prevent you or your employees from working in farming.

CASE STUDY

An 86 year old self-employed farmer died when he slipped and fell over. He was checking his cattle when he noticed a piece of plastic on the floor. As he went to pick up the plastic he fell and banged his head.

CASE STUDY

A 61 year old farm worker was repairing a trailer when he slipped or tripped. The worker struck his head and unfortunately died from his injuries.

Safe site

Slips and trips can happen anywhere on the farm, but there are some simple things you can do to prevent accidents from happening:

- Consider the weather conditions your farm might encounter. Keep main outdoor walkways clear in icy or wintery conditions by using salt or sand.
- If a surface becomes slippery due to a spillage or cold weather, take steps to remove or minimise the hazards as much as possible. Make sure you inform other people on the farm including visitors, contractors, delivery drivers, casual workers etc.
- Check working areas (e.g. farm workshops, yards) are free from obstructions, such as trailing cables. Any hazards should be clearly marked and moved out of the way if possible e.g. placed safely overhead. Adequate lighting can reduce the risk of tripping in sheds and yards – particularly important during winter months when much of the day is dark or dull.
- Notify any visiting workers (e.g. lorry drivers, vets) of potential hazards as soon as they arrive on farm – you have a duty to ensure they are safe when they are on your premises.
- Some work activities may cause slippery surfaces. Take action to control the risk. e.g. Provide good drainage or gridded walkways in wet areas such as vegetable washing areas or dairies.



Farm yards:

- Keep the yard tidy
- Remove obstructions
- Use sufficient lighting to clearly expose slopes or steps



Use the right cleaning methods:

- Make sure the cleaning method is effective for the type of floor you have
- Smooth surfaces must be completely dry after cleaning, or exclude pedestrians until the floor is fully dry
- Remove spillages as quickly as possible
- Have effective arrangements for routine cleaning and dealing with spills
- Use the correct detergent mixed at the right concentration

Stop floors becoming contaminated:

- Use entrance matting
- Fix leaks from machinery or buildings
- Make sure plant and machinery are well maintained
- Conduct tasks in a way that will minimise spillages
- Plan pedestrian and vehicle routes to avoid contaminated areas



Look at the flooring and work environment:

- Check for loose, damaged and worn flooring – replace if needed
- Make sure flooring that is likely to get wet or attract spillages has good traction
- Use sufficient lighting to clearly illuminate slopes or steps
- Keep walk ways and work areas clear of obstructions



Get organised:

- Plan and manage work to avoid rushing, overcrowding, trailing cables and other obstructions
- Involve employees to help identify and manage hazards



Use the right footwear:

- Slip resistant footwear can help prevent accidents
- Trial footwear to make sure it is suitable for the working conditions
- If employees require footwear as part of their personal protective equipment, you must supply this free of charge.

Make your farm a safer place

Remember everyone on farm has a responsibility to keep the workplace safe and should:

- Manage and clean up any spillages
- Report damaged floors
- Keep the farm tidy and remove obstructions
- Wear the right footwear for the task, and replace if damaged.



CASE STUDY

A farmer in Scotland was using a slurry tanker to pump out rainwater in the winter. He left the tractor running while he got out of the cab to check the pump on the slurry tanker. As he pushed the pump lever across, he slipped on some ice and fell to the ground hitting his head on the draw bar of the tanker. This knocked him unconscious for almost an hour and a half in freezing weather. He was admitted to hospital for 10 days following the accident.



**Further advice, guidance and literature on making
your farm a safer place visit:**

www.nfuonline.com/HSW

or call NFU CallFirst on 0370 845 8458

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