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Understanding the Factors that Lead to Slip, Trip, and Fall Injuries

Sometimes it's tempting to look for quick solutions when it comes to solving problems without fully looking at the causes or the system in which they exist. This tendency can be detrimental when addressing slip, trip, and fall hazards.

Posting signs, cleaning up messes quickly, and advising employees to be more careful are all quick solutions, but might not address the underlying problem that creates the hazard in the first place. To truly create a safe environment, a few factors need to be looked at to ensure safety.

Start by examining the area and determine what can create a hazard; different types of areas require different inspection.

Temporary Hazards

As we move into spring, there can be an increase in slip, trip, and fall incidents due to melted snow freezing overnight, creating a slippery surface in parking lots and walking paths. Remember to keep parking lots and walkways clear of ice and snow. Ensure downspouts are not crossing or emptying onto walkways. Have salt, sand, or other anti-slip material on hand and monitor the weather so you can anticipate slippery conditions. Being prepared could save you a potentially costly incident.

Walkways

Check to see if walkway surfaces are stable and level. Look for surface contamination that could make the area slippery. Obstacles or clutter blocking walkways can also be hazardous. Ensure walkways are in good repair.

Ramps and Stairs

For safety, having slip resistant treads and nosing can be important. Check that risers are uniform in height and handrails are sturdy and in good repair.

Mats and Grates

Check if mats or grates are adequate to stop the tracking of mud and water into a facility. Are the mats curling or in need of replacement? Is there a supply of replacement mats nearby in the event of inclement weather or heavy traffic? Are the mats secure?

Visibility

Proper lighting is crucial for safety. Consider also using mirrors to improve sight lines and marking any transitions between surfaces.

Falls are a leading cause of non-fatal, unintentional injuries treated in emergency rooms. In North America, this results in over 8 million hospital visits every year. Any facility that the public can normally access or has high employee traffic should be examined and reviewed regularly to ensure safety.

For more information visit: RMAAlberta.com

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