



HUTCHINGS AGENCY, INC.

*Insurance*

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# Loss Control Guide for Restaurant Safety

## *Slips, Trips and Falls*

Slips, trips and falls are among the major causes of customer accidents in the restaurant business. Besides the potential injury resulting in pain and suffering of your injured customers, these accidents reflect adversely on your insurance claims experience and insurability. Therefore, you, the business owner and all your employees should be constantly alert to any unsafe conditions or unsafe acts that could lead to an accident. All employees should be on your safety team and have the knowledge and authority to take corrective action when unsafe conditions or unsafe acts are observed.

There are steps you and your safety team can take to keep your restaurant free from customer accidents.

## **INSIDE**

The vast majority of all slip and fall accidents involve water (including ice and snow) on the walking surface. With this in mind let's first look inside the building for potential trouble spots and conditions that could lead to a slip accident.

- **THE ENTRANCE and FOYER** . In wet weather, "Walk-Off" mats should be provided at all entry doors used by customers. These mats should be able to absorb the water from wet shoes and boots so the possibility of slip/fall accidents is reduced. Maintain an adequate back up supply of mats so if wet weather conditions persist, the saturated mats can be replaced as they become ineffective and add to the problem.

If the floor in these areas tends to get wet and slippery even with the use of "Walk-Off" mats, there are several other precautions that you should take to prevent slip/fall. First, a mop bucket and wringer along with a good mop will help to keep conditions under control if water starts to build up on the floor. Also, portable signs warning of "WET FLOORS" can be used both outside and inside the doors to alert customers of the slippery conditions.

The manager or supervisor on duty should have the responsibility of checking on a frequent basis to make certain that the area is safe.

- **THE DINING and LOUNGE AREAS** can present the same conditions as the entryway because of spills or wet footwear. The same clean-up/mop-up precautions as mentioned above should be practiced. Also, tile floors, carpets or other floor covering should be in good condition (no holes, tears, cracks or missing sections) and checked on a regular (weekly) basis with immediate corrective action taken if any unsafe conditions are noted.
- **AISLES, WAITING AREAS and REST ROOM** floors should also be checked on a regular basis every day during business hours to make sure they are dry, clear and free of hazards.

- INSIDE STAIRS should have treads, tread covers or carpeting that is free of tears, holes or any other condition which could cause a trip or fall. There should be a sturdy handrail on each side of the stairs and adequate lighting on every flight of stairs used by your customers.
- CHAIRS that collapse can cause serious injury to your customers. Inspect them every week. Defective chairs and seats should be removed from the property so they cannot be put back into use.

## **OUTSIDE**

Your Parking Lot, Sidewalks and Outside Stairs should be your main areas of concern when it comes to the control of slip and fall accidents outside the building.

- PARKING LOTS AND SIDEWALKS should be clean and level without potholes, depressions or cracks that could cause customers to trip and fall. There should be adequate lighting for nighttime use. Downspouts that empty water onto the parking lot or sidewalks should be re-directed to a dry well or other areas. If ice and snow are possibilities in your area, make arrangements to have the snow removed as soon as possible after each storm. Have sand or ice-melting chemicals available to spread on ice that might form as melting and re-freezing occurs.
- OUTSIDE STAIRS should be in good repair with no cracked or worn treads and should not create a slip/fall hazard when wet. Stairs should have a sturdy, secure handrail on both sides so patrons entering and leaving have access to a handrail. Snow and ice removal is extremely important.

The safety and well being of your customers and employees should be one of the major concerns and objectives of the day-to-day operation of your business. Make safety and accident prevention a part of everyone's job.