

# SLIP, TRIP, FALL SERIES: A SAMPLE PROGRAM TO HELP BUILD OR AUDIT YOUR SLIP, TRIP AND FALL PREVENTION STRATEGY



## A TEMPLATE FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

A STF Program template includes the core elements that comprise a business management system from policy statements through auditing and continuous improvement. It allows the flexibility to adapt and reflect your corporate culture and realities.

Efforts to prevent slips, trips and falls takes active management and consistent attention to reduce the likelihood and severity of a claim or lawsuit. This sample Slip, Trip, Fall Program (STF Program) provides a starting point for the development of your customized STF Program. The template includes the core elements that comprise a business management system from policy statements through auditing and continuous improvement. As with most programs, allocation of resources should be commensurate with risk. In this case, the impact is relatively high due to the potential financial, reputational and regulatory risk that accompany visitor and pedestrian slip, trip, falls on your property.

*Why invest in a formal STF Program?* The answer is simple...to:

1. Reduce the potential for STF incidents that detract from running your core business.
2. Demonstrate that your company is engaged in the prevention of STF hazards.
3. Establish a standardized approach to the prevention of STF incidents.

### CONTRACT RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

Contracts are likely embedded in all aspects of your organization's operations. They come in many styles and often take the form of Master Service Agreements, Real Estate Leases, Equipment or Fixed Asset Leases and Purchase Orders. They are used to arrange for the delivery of supplies, basic services, and for the performance of specialized services such as landscaping, pest control, janitorial and parking lot maintenance.

It is good policy to have contracts reviewed by legal prior to execution. Proper and consistent treatment of contract risk is a significant lever for controlling the overall cost of risk for our organization. The following are the contract risk management standards. Note: sample “standards” must be reviewed by Legal Counsel with expertise in contracts and property law, and reflect your unique business circumstances.

- Agreements should not contain any limitation to, cap on, or waiver a company’s right of recovery for direct or consequential losses arising out of the delivery of services to said company, or which limits a vendor/supplier’s liability for such losses.
- Each agreement should contain an indemnification provision requiring the vendor/supplier to indemnify and hold harmless a company for liability (direct, indirect, and consequential including reasonable defense costs) arising out of the delivery of the services described in the scope of work.
- Each agreement should contain the requirement that the vendor/supplier provide additional insured status coverage to a company.
- The vendor/supplier, including their subcontractors, should be required to post and maintain the minimum types and amounts of commercial insurance that are typical for the nature of services being provided or work described in the Scope of Services/Statement of Work. Acceptable insurance limits should be established by a company’s Risk Management and Legal teams. All contracts should contain special consideration for local and state regulations, too.

## REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHITECTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

The application of design controls during the planning and renovation phases of a property are the most effective and least costly time to manage STF hazards. Implementing a policy to ensure that new construction and major activities include a design review of the materials and architectural features relevant to the property should be included. This method is frequently called “Prevention thru Design” and may include an analysis of the risks related, but not limited, to the following:

- A water feature and fountains
- Below eye level planters, floor recesses and floor elevation changes



- Passthroughs and known shortcuts
- Separation between hand washing stations and drying areas
- Water bottle filling stations
- Building entrance surface changes
- Curbs and medians
- Lighting, especially at entrances and exits
- Umbrella stations
- Guest room features, such as shower transitions
- Floor surface selection to ensure that the floor surface meets or exceeds the National Floor Safety Institute recommended standard for slip resistance.

## PHYSICAL ESTABLISHMENT EXPOSURES ASSESSMENT

Once a property is occupied it is incumbent on the company owner/occupant to ensure daily changes in operations are deployed to minimize STF risk. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) should be implemented on a scheduled basis or in the event that conditions change during the day.

1. Develop a checklist that addresses STF hazards that are inherent to the property, those highlighted by STF claims or near misses and any unique challenges posed by the location.
2. Establish a cadence for the inspections which should include vacant properties.
3. Where opportunities are identified, document the potential hazard with a digital photo. For hazards that present an immediate threat, install signage/barrier tape to control access to the area and notify local management.

## JANITORIAL POLICIES AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

The following policies and procedures will help to ensure that floor surfaces are well maintained.

- All janitorial services will follow the appropriate maintenance procedures as specified by their company for the specific floor surface in the facility.
- Management and janitorial personnel will clean up standing water and spills as soon as reasonably practicable.
- Weather conditions will be assessed periodically and throughout the day when conditions dictate.
- Placement and maintenance of floor mats will be pre-determined and used with caution so as not to create additional trip hazards.
- Common areas with water features, such as bathrooms, fountains, and drink stations should have controls in place such as drains, water absorbent mats and a short travel distance between the sink and towel or blow dryer dispenser in restrooms.
- All incidents related to janitorial services will be investigated and documented to determine a root cause and corrective action implemented where needed.



## WEATHER OR SPILL RESPONSE OPERATING PROCEDURES

It is important to recognize that floor conditions may change frequently due to local weather patterns.

Commitment to the prevention of STF incidents should include a formal approach to handling wet

weather events and water spills on the floor. The key areas where these hazards may be located include:

### Exterior Areas

- Building entrances
- Parking lots
- Parking garages
- Driveways
- Pools and spas

### Interior Areas

- Entrances/lobbies
- Product displays
- Check-out stations
- Restrooms
- Drink stations
- Restaurants/vending machines

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Each property location, should at a minimum implement the following SOPs into their daily operations.

1. Upon identification of a liquid or water event (weather or spill-related), the area should be secured. Eliminate the water source where possible.
2. Use warning signs, cones, floor dryers, barrier caution tape, and/or absorbent pads to control the liquid spread and access to the area.
3. Clean the liquid completely using approved methods including, mops, wet/dry vacuums and absorbent pads.
4. Floor mats with appropriate walk-off lengths can be employed to prevent incident. (Snow: 10-12 walking steps, Rain: 8-10 steps, Dry: 6-8 steps, collect dust from outside).
5. Implement changes to the operations to reduce the likelihood for recurrence.

## NOTIFICATION AND TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

Early notification of potential STF hazards are of paramount importance to a company. The following methods for early notification will be employed as applicable to our facilities.

- Deploy close-captioned cameras in high traffic or high risk areas.

- Identify and document potential sources of liquid or water intrusion.
- Use local weather monitoring systems for notification of an upcoming weather event.
- For internal sources of water, create a valve list or map, conduct regular inspections and exercise the valves to ensure all systems are in proper working order.
- Ensure that personnel are assigned responsibility to inspect for, receive notification of and respond to water flow events.
- Provide easy mechanisms, such as QR Codes in common areas, for easy guest notification of spills or fall hazard conditions to property management personnel.
- Conduct a facility STF vulnerability risk assessment annually.

## INCIDENT REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION



When responding to an alleged visitor or pedestrian incident, it's critical that the company's employees remain professional at all times and show genuine concern for the person's injury or damages. The specific information recorded at the scene of an incident can be critical to the ultimate outcome of any liability claim that may be generated. The responding employees will conduct the following procedures in response to an incident.

### Incident Response

1. Treat the guest/customer with respect and compassion.
2. Do not admit fault.
3. Call 911 if/when
  - An injury is life-threatening
  - The customer requests assistance
  - Medical treatment is required
4. Report the incident to your local or area management.

## COMPLETE A CUSTOMER INCIDENT REPORT

1. Obtain a statement from the guest/customer.
2. Obtain contact information from the guest/customer.
3. Provide additional information for any witnesses.
4. Take photos of the conditions surrounding the area of the incident.

5. Note lighting, time of day, weather conditions and other contributing factors.
6. Store and maintain surveillance camera video.
7. Do not supply a copy of this internal report to the guest/customer, please refer them to your leadership team contact.



## CORRECTIVE AND PREVENTATIVE ACTION

1. Mitigate the hazard by employing the appropriate response protocol.
2. Identify the root cause for the incident. Hint: most incidents or physical conditions can be traced back to a substandard design, management system or preventive maintenance practices.
  - Consider the floor condition and maintenance
  - Identify the source of the liquid and the physical conditions that contributed
  - Explore the time, day, lighting and environmental conditions that could have contributed
  - Review mechanical system placement (such as electrical sockets and central vacuum connections) to limit use of extension cords and long hoses
3. Implement corrective actions to eliminate re-occurrence of the incident to include:
  - Document correcting actions
  - Identify target dates for completion
  - Assign responsibility for completed
  - Close out the corrective actions document once completed
  - Provide training to effected personnel, such as janitorial or maintenance

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