

# Slip-and-Fall Prevention

In veterinary clinics, a slip or fall can happen to anyone at any time. Slip-and-fall injuries are a rising concern for businesses today, as they can affect workers' compensation and general liability policies. That's why it's important to build a prevention plan for reducing risks and increasing safety.

Contaminants, including wet substances on hard surface flooring, are a primary factor in slips and falls. Controlling the introduction and removal of moisture and other slippery contaminants is key to prevention, as moisture creates a thin film that separates the soles of the footwear from contact with the floor, reducing traction.

In addition to contaminants on floors, the top slip-and-fall risks in veterinary clinics include:

- Handling and restraint of animals
- Poor drainage of pipes and drains
- Indoor and outdoor surface irregularities
- Weather, such as snow, ice, and rain
- Inadequate lighting
- Defective, inadequate, worn, or misused stairs and handrails
- Housekeeping items such as tools, clutter, cords, wires, and medical tubing
- Improper use of floor mats and runners
- Flooring materials and cleaning methods

**Slip-and-fall loss prevention includes the following approaches.**

## Inspection and Response

Periodic inspection of floor surfaces is a key method to identify slip-and-fall hazards. Regular inspections should be made of areas that are potentially high

risk, such as parking lots, lobbies, and animal treatment rooms. Identification of an unsafe condition should include a procedure for cleanup or repair.

- Have cleaning and drying supplies readily available
- Give authority and provide training to delegated personnel to enable them to act quickly to address the condition
- Secure the area from foot traffic and correct the condition
- Initiate prompt response and claims reporting if an incident occurs

## Identify and Mitigate the Source of the Condition

When an incident occurs, the next step is to determine the origin, such as pedestrian traffic, food spills, feces or urine, animal bathing, condensation, power cords, pipe leaks, and damaged floors. Eliminating all conditions may not be possible depending on the scope of the operation. However, loss prevention controls to mitigate slip-and-fall exposures include:

- Response procedures and adequate supplies for prompt cleanup
- Postings warning the public of the condition
- Slip-resistant floor treatments and coverings
- Restriction of food and beverages to designated areas
- Use of absorbent walk-off mats at doorways
- Investigating the floor contaminant(s) and the source
- A plan to reduce recurrence

Finally, in areas where moisture is common, surface improvements may be the best solution. These improvements include roughing, etching, application of nonslip coatings, replacement of flooring for slip resistance, and applying slip-resistant abrasive tapes or self-adhesive matting. ■

## Resources

Visit the CNA Slip and Fall Prevention Guidance page to access informational guides and checklists for all of the above at [cna.com/web/guest/cna/sp/slip-fall-risk-management](https://cna.com/web/guest/cna/sp/slip-fall-risk-management).

*This information is produced and presented by CNA, which is solely responsible for its content. Continental Casualty Company, a member of the CNA group of insurance companies, is the underwriter of the AICPA Professional Liability Insurance Program.*

*The purpose of this article is to provide information, rather than advice or opinion. It is accurate to the best of the author's knowledge as of the date of the article. Accordingly, this article should not be viewed as a substitute for the guidance and recommendations of a retained professional. In addition, CNA does not endorse any coverages, systems, processes, or protocols addressed herein unless they are produced or created by CNA.*

*Any references to non-CNA Web sites are provided solely for convenience, and CNA disclaims any responsibility with respect to such websites.*

*Examples are for illustrative purposes only and not intended to establish any standards of care, serve as legal advice, or acknowledge any given factual situation is covered under any CNA insurance policy. The relevant insurance policy provides actual terms, coverages, amounts, conditions, and exclusions for an insured. All products and services may not be available in all states and may be subject to change without notice.*

*"CNA" is a registered trademark of CNA Financial Corporation. Certain CNA Financial Corporation subsidiaries use the "CNA" trademark in connection with insurance underwriting and claims activities. Copyright © 2023 CNA. All rights reserved.*

