

# Golf and country club safety solutions

Winter 2010



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## Slip, trip and fall safety

The leading loss for most hospitality operations (in both frequency and severity) is slip, trip and fall (STF) incidents. No one is exempt from these types of injuries including employees, club members, member-guests, vendors, contractors, etc. It is the club's responsibility to maintain a level of care for the property that will minimize STFs.

Country clubs and resorts have come a long way over the years in eliminating STF exposures. Some of these prevention measures were developed through advances in footwear. The purpose of "green-friendly" golf spikes, invented in 1992, was to maintain the condition of fairways, greens and club facilities.<sup>1</sup> Obviously, replacing metal spikes with rubber cleats greatly increases slip resistance, thus reducing the potential for falls.

In this issue, we will focus on the reduction of STFs. This involves taking the time to review and update your safety and loss prevention policies and procedures, identifying problem areas and developing goals for helping reduce STFs.

Reducing the potential for STF incidents can be accomplished by identifying contributing factors that lead to these events. Most STF incidents can be contributed to the following factors:

- Surface composition
- Human factors
- Level changes
- Surface changes
- Surface conditions
- Obstructions
- Visibility
- Stairs
- Foreign substances potential

In many cases, it is a combination of these contributing factors that can lead to STF events. For example, it is foreseeable for a pedestrian to slip and fall when walking from slip resistant carpeting onto a marble tile that has a small wet spot. In this scenario, we can identify several contributing factors (e.g. surface composition, human factor and foreign substance potential).

Let's take a closer look at each contributing factor and define the concern.

<p><b>Human factors:</b> The assumption that different people have different physical capabilities.</p>	<p><b>Concerns:</b> Golf and country clubs can anticipate a mixture of individuals visiting their club from aging baby boomers to toddlers at the pool. Accommodations may be necessary to address human factor limitations.<sup>1</sup></p>
<p><b>Level changes:</b> Floor height changes of less than four steps.</p>	<p><b>Concerns:</b> Many steps lack handrails or contrast from step to step. Step risers and treads should be uniform and meet local building codes.</p>
<p><b>Surface changes:</b> Changes from one type of material to another.</p>	<p><b>Concerns:</b> Walkways that change from a highly slip resistive surface to another considered slippery (e.g. carpet to marble flooring).</p>
<p><b>Surface condition:</b> Actual conditions of the surface.</p>	<p><b>Concerns:</b> Maintenance of the walking surfaces is important. Consider loose carpeting, broken tiles, protruding pavers, broken boardwalks, etc.</p>
<p><b>Obstructions:</b> Anything protruding into the normal walking path.</p>	<p><b>Concerns:</b> Items that can contribute to the likelihood of a slip or fall. In the club atmosphere, these can include extension cords, planters, parking lot bumpers, floor displays, etc. Poor housekeeping is a primary culprit in STF incidents from obstructions.</p>
<p><b>Visibility:</b> How easy the surface is to see.</p>	<p><b>Concerns:</b> Visibility pertains to more than just lighting. Other considerations include glare and color contrast.</p>
<p><b>Stairs:</b> Greater than three steps.</p>	<p><b>Concerns:</b> Consider the frequency of use, whether they are for emergency use only, etc. (curved or spiral stairs greatly increase the potential for falls).</p>
<p><b>Foreign substances potential:</b> Likelihood a substance will be found.</p>	<p><b>Concerns:</b> It is not necessarily the Slip Index or SCOF that determines the surface safety for walking. Usually a localized spot is slipperier than the rest of the floor that causes the unsuspecting and unprepared pedestrian to slip and fall.</p>

## What to do next?

The key to helping minimize STF incidents is to identify contributing factors (or the potential thereof) in a designated area. An inspection program is needed throughout the property on a regular frequency.

Use the contributing factors to evaluate areas such as:

### Clubhouse

The kitchen flooring within a clubhouse will have a daily concern for foreign substance potential. The surface composition will alter with contamination from grease residue, water, etc. thus creating a slipperier surface. Formal floor cleaning policies, good housekeeping practices and the use of slip resistant footwear will help minimize the potential of a STF incident.

The lobby/entrance area may have level changes, a surface composition that is extremely slippery when wet and the need for adequate lighting during evening events. Highlighting level changes will help reduce trips and falls and the use of walk-off mats will help minimize the potential of foreign materials gathering on lobby flooring.

The locker rooms are similar to kitchens in that daily inspections and housekeeping are required. Mats in areas most likely to encounter water will help reduce slips and falls. The use of grab bars and rubber mats will help reduce slips and falls in the showers (human factors).

### Parking lots

The parking lots, sidewalks and other exterior pathways require periodic inspections to assure surface conditions are acceptable. Obstructions are common factors in trips and falls such as concrete parking curbs and planters. Assuring all light bulbs are working properly and landscaping is not covering fixtures will help assure lighting is adequate.

### Golf course

Elevated playing areas (e.g. tee boxes, greens, sand traps, etc.) that have steps or stairs require a slip resistant surface for the step treads. Surface treads such as railroad ties or treated wood can be improved with matting. The potential for foreign substance can be minimized by adjusting sprinkler/irrigation systems.

Shelters, restrooms and/or halfway houses may present a variety of contributing factors depending on the design. The daily inspection of these areas should include surface conditions, minimizing obstructions, and removing foreign substances from the floor.

Golf maintenance buildings and flooring have a very high potential for foreign substances and should be inspected daily (preferably at the end of each day). The combination of poor visibility and obstructions creates the opportunity for an employee to trip and fall. Slip resistive footwear will help reduce the potential of slips and falls, and that includes climbing on and off equipment.



# Slip, trip and fall prevention checklist

## Floors, kitchens and maintenance areas

- Are employees reminded often to pay attention to where they are walking? Be wary of slippery floors, clutter, and worn, torn or loose carpeting.
- When moving materials, can employees see where they are going?
- Do employees report unsafe conditions when observed? These include spills, poor or no lighting, torn, worn, or loose carpeting and slippery floors.
- Are floors cleaned on a regular basis using degreasers, brushing and extraction of contaminants?

## Footwear

- Do employees who have access to the kitchen and/or maintenance areas wear slip resistant sole shoes?
- Do all players adhere to the soft spike policy?

## Entrance mats

- Do entrance mats adequately cover the foyer and entry into the property?
- Are floor mats in good condition, i.e., no curled edges that could cause a trip?
- Are floor mats inspected every day?
- Are mats used in locker rooms and restrooms?

## Sidewalks and parking lots

- Are sidewalks free of holes, broken or cracked concrete?
- Are exterior surfaces illuminated with good lighting?
- Are unsafe conditions reported immediately (holes in sidewalk or parking lot, uneven surfaces or exposed rebar, etc.)?

## Good housekeeping

- Are work areas clutter-free and cleaned regularly?
- Are warning signs placed to alert of a hazard that cannot be removed immediately?

## Pedestrian bridges and elevated tees

- Are boardwalks or steps equipped with slip resistant mats?
- Are mats or slip resistive strips in good condition and replaced periodically?
- Are warning signs in place alerting pedestrians "Slippery when wet"?

## Ladders

- Are ladders used by employees in good condition?
- Do employees use an appropriate ladder for the necessary task?
- Are ladders inspected?
- Do employees carefully ascend and descend from the ladders, using three points of contact at all times?

## Swimming pool and patios

- Does the patio have a slip resistant surface "when wet"?
- Are attendants available to enforce "no running" by children?
- Are "Slippery when wet" signs used in restroom areas, etc.?

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.usatoday.com/careers/dream/dream001.htm>

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