**Appendix A**

**Further Guidance Linked to the Minimisation of Slips, Trips and Falls**

**1. Actions to prevent or minimise the risk of slip and fall incidents:**

The 4 main causes in order:-

* 1. **Slippery /wet surfaces – caused by water and other fluids**;

As prevention is better than cure – best practice is not to allow fluid to spill on the floor in the first place or if it does, have a procedure in place to wipe up the spill as soon as it occurs. As part of your risk assessment you should consider:-

* Establish why fluid spills on the floor.
* Is it a recurring problem or a one off?
* Is it an historical problem?
* Is it a machine or design fault?
* Is it human error?
* Is it due to faulty equipment?
* Can it be prevented or can it be reduced?
  1. **Slippery /dry surfaces - caused by dry or dusty floor contamination such as plastic, lint or talcum powder etc.;**

Surfaces can be just as slippery in the presence of dry powders or other dry materials as they can in the presence of wet substances. Again, the prevention of the material getting onto the floor is the first line of defence. It is preventable with a little bit of planning and thoughtfulness.

* Does the material need to be used in the first place?
* Is there an alternative material or method?
* Does the material need to be handled /used in the current area?
* Is there a waste bin nearby in which to place the waste?
* Is it regularly emptied?
* Can the product be changed?
* Can the process be changed?
* If cannot be helped, is there a dedicated safe work are for the process?
  1. **Obstructions, both temporary and permanent;**

*“Floor obstructions are items usually placed somewhere temporarily whilst a more permanent place is found, but invariably this is where they stay”.*

It may be a pile of paperwork, stack of books, a few cardboard boxes or even a foot stool. These ‘temporary’ places are much more hazardous than permanent obstructions as permanent obstructions can be hazard marked and clearly seen.

* Start with a ‘fresh pair of eyes’ and look for obvious trip hazards first
* Check designated store areas are not taken up with rubbish
* Is the item(s) relevant to the department?
* Is it in the most appropriate area?
* Is it really necessary to keep it in the current position?

For the permanent obstruction:-

* Does it need to be there?
* Could it be relocated?
* Is it easily seen?
* Can something be placed near it to ‘steer’ people away
  1. **Uneven surfaces and changes of level, such as unmarked ramps.**

Certain changes in surface levels are of course inevitable and in most part acceptable e.g. stairs, steps, kerbs and door thresholds etc. What is not acceptable is a hazardous change in level.

* Can pedestrians be re-directed?
* Can the level be changed or eliminated to make it safer?
* Is the change in level highlighted?
* Is a warning notice required?
* Is there a danger when carrying loads or using a trolley?
* Is there a wheel chair issue?
* Can the floor covering colour be changed where the level changes?
* Is lighting adequate?
* Is a handrail required?

Remember, small changes in levels can be just as dangerous as bigger ones as the results are the same. Consider hazards at night as well as during the day.

**2. General Considerations**

* Do not carry any beverages unless:-
* the vessel (cup or mug) is lidded, or
* the vessel is carried on a tray.

This is particularly relevant in an uncarpeted walkway or room.

* Check floors regularly for condition. Loose tiles, holes, cracks and raised edges. Check also carpet for rucks, tears and loose edges.
* Obstructions and objects left lying around can easily go unnoticed and cause a trip – including waste paper bins, sacks and open bottom drawers of filing cabinets. Keep the work area clean and tidy.
* Consider a dedicated walking route identified by rail or painted lines and keep this area free for hazard free walking.
* Keep cables tidy and away from walk areas.
* Appropriate footwear can play an important part in preventing slips and trips. This is especially important where floors can’t be kept dry due to certain processes. Some departments such as Catering, have a specific protocol concerning footwear due to the nature of their business. Consider too the footwear in relation to other task such as manual handling where good traction is important.
* Lighting should be adequate in order to see hazards that lie ahead.
* Keep walkways free from rubbish.
* Don’t run and also keep to walking on dedicated footpaths and walkways. Don’t take short cuts - particularly where shoes can become contaminated by wet grass and mud etc.
* Consider and plan any task which may give rise to hazards to others e.g. cleaning/washing of busy corridors or repair/maintenance work etc. If this cannot be avoided, ensure adequate warning signs are displayed in the appropriate area. If signs are not considered to be enough, barriers should be erected to keep others safe. Remember to remove the signs when the hazard no longer exists.
* Clean up any spillage’s immediately even if you didn’t spill it yourself. The Housekeeping department will respond to any case of difficulty.

**3. Case studies**

Here is a sample of SDH Trust problems others have encountered and how they have been resolved.

Example 1

Patients coming in to the hospital would shake wet umbrellas on the floor before continuing, making the floor wet. Mats were extended to accommodate the wet but the problem continued. A notice has now been made directing patients to shake their umbrellas before entering the hospital. This is working well with no further problems reported.

Example 2

Talcum powder was frequently used on the elderly after bathing. Increased incidences of falling in the Elderly Care wards was reported, thought to be linked to new flooring, but on closer inspection a film of talcum powder was left on the floor. The use of talcum powder has been withdrawn, the floor surfaces thoroughly cleaned and treated and there have been a reduced number of falls.

Example 3

During past winters, there had been several instances of slips due to ice forming on the road, footpaths and car parks. As a result, the salting regime has been reviewed and improved.

Example 4

Tripping hazards had been reported due to raised manhole/inspection covers. The covers were lifted, the framework cleaned and the cover evenly replaced. No further reports have been received.