

Spring Brings Wet Slippery Floors

Written by *Willie Henning*
DMI Environmental Health & Safety Consultant

According to the weather people, meteorological spring started on March 1st. However, as I finish this article on March 5th, basically the entire state of Wisconsin is blanketed in snow or rain showers. This provides a harsh reminder that Slip, Trip, and Fall season continues throughout the spring months here in our state.

Spring is well known for unpredictable weather, often bringing heavy rains that can lead to slippery floors, overnight freezing that creates icy walkways, and increased risk of accidents. All combined, the technical colleges have thousands of entrances and hundreds of miles of hallways, not to mention stairs both inside and outside. Wet surfaces can potentially lead to slip and fall incidents jeopardizing employee, student, and customer safety and lead to legal liabilities. Fortunately, with the right measures, we can all help protect our colleges from these hazards.

Wet floors are one of the leading causes of workplace injuries. According to the National Floor Safety Institute (NFSI), over 2 million fall-related injuries occur every year due to flooring conditions, with wet surfaces being a major contributor. These incidents are particularly prevalent in spring, as rainwater gets tracked indoors, creating hazards in entryways, hallways, and other high-traffic areas.

Use Entrance Mats to Minimize Water Tracking

I am aware the college uses entrance mats but remember, these are essential for maintaining clean and safe floors, especially during wet conditions. Many mats are designed to absorb up to 1.5 gallons of water per square yard, effectively reducing the amount of moisture tracked into the building. Ensure regular maintenance of the mats, clean and replace regularly to maintain their performance. Also, inspect the mats to eliminate trip hazards with curling or wrinkling.

Implement Effective Spill Management Procedures

Spill management is critical to maintaining a safe walking/working surface, especially during rainy spring weather. According to OSHA, slips, trips, and falls are among the leading causes of workplace injuries. This is further emphasized by the fact that slips, trips, and falls have been the leading frequency claim for DMI for over 20 years. Consider putting an emphasis on the importance of quickly cleaning up spills to reduce the hazard exposure to anyone walking by.

Maintain Restrooms to Prevent Slip Hazards

Restrooms are another critical area where slips can occur. Water from sinks, overflowing fixtures, or leaky plumbing can accumulate on the floor leading to dangerous conditions. Consider implementing non-slip mats and increasing regular checks to ensure the floors remain in good condition especially when rainy weather is upon us.

Key Takeaways

Spring weather presents unique challenges for maintaining safe floors. By implementing solutions like high-quality mats, rapid spill management, and regular maintenance, the college can greatly reduce the risk of slips and falls around the campus. These efforts not only protect employees, students, and visitors but also enhance the college's reputation and operational efficiency.

Provided by your....

| *Collaborators in Risk Management* |

