

Preventing Slip and Fall Accidents

Slip and falls are by far the leading type of accidents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. The high frequency of accidents coupled with the severity of injuries, makes this a vitally important issue.

Accident impact

Injuries from slips and falls can be very serious, causing significant lost work days, long recovery times and even life-threatening complications.

The economic impact can be devastating to a business of any size. (Liability insurance claims and litigation, workers' comp insurance claims and litigation, and lack of continuity of your staff.)

Your reputation as a quality caregiver can also be scarred irreparably.

Have a prevention plan

While not all slip and fall accidents are preventable, a comprehensive prevention plan can decrease the likelihood and reduce the cost of these accidents. Every nursing home and assisted living facility should have a prevention plan. Here are some first steps to create one:

- **Analyze the causes of slip and fall accidents that have occurred in your operation. Typically, wet floors are the top cause.**
- **Identify risk factors. Physical and environmental factors play a part as well as human factors, such as a patient's susceptibility to falls.**

Work the plan

Preventing slip and fall accidents needs to be everybody's job and the top priority for business operations.

- **Train every employee about prevention and make it a job requirement to act upon risks immediately when they are identified.**
- **Involve patients in safe practices.**
- **Review each patient's mobility, mental alertness, medications and continence level to help determine susceptibility to falls.**
- **Implement and enforce policies like requiring non-skid footwear, that aid in prevention.**
- **Equip your facility with strategically located safety kits like wet floor signs and cones to deal with issues.**

Although slip and fall accidents are not totally preventable, an effective plan in action can significantly help reduce accidents in nursing homes and long term care facilities. Keeping the plan fresh and active in your organization requires an ongoing dialogue and communication between all employees, residents and their families. The benefits of preventing slips and falls are far reaching and represent good business in terms of economic viability, optimal quality of care and quality of life.

For more information and additional risk management and prevention tools, visit: fwcruminsurance.com