



Risk Management *Tips*

Slip, Trip, and Fall Risk Management Tips

Slip, trip, and fall claims, including falls from elevations, account for 13% of all claims reported by Boys & Girls Club clients to Markel. The potential impact of a fall from an elevation can be reduced by installing appropriate groundcover for playground environments and protective matting for all indoor activities requiring children to leave their feet.

As a general guideline, surfaces around playground equipment must have at least 12” of appropriate loose-fill material or unitary surfacing that meets the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) F1292 “Standard Specification for Impact Attenuation of Surfacing Materials Within the Use Zone of Playground Equipment.” Appropriate loose-fill material is defined as any material tested to ASTM F1292 standards, including unitary surfaces, engineered wood fiber, pea gravel, sand, shredded/recycled rubber mulch, wood mulch (not CCA-treated), and wood chips.

The use zone encompasses the surface under and around a piece of equipment onto which a child falling or exiting would be expected to land. These areas are also designated for unrestricted circulation around the equipment. Protective surfacing must extend at least six feet in all directions from play equipment. For swings, be sure surfacing extends twice the height of the suspending bar in the back and front. You can get additional information regarding outdoor playground safety by reading Markel’s Safety 1st guide, *Safe Playgrounds Reducing the Risk*, at www.markelsocialservice.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/PDFs/RMN/safe%20playgrounds%20tip.pdf.

Steps you can take to help reduce trips, slips, and falls include:

- Inspect indoor and outdoor walkways frequently, and eliminate tripping hazards and spills immediately. Check playgrounds and activity fields for potential hazards, as well. Cordon off high traffic areas until the hazard is resolved.
- If you need to use an extension cord, tape it to the floor, and remove it when you are done.
- Implement wet, icy, and snowy weather action plans. Post caution signs to advise visitors of potential slippery surfaces, and store them promptly when conditions improve to ensure effectiveness.
- Be prepared to start snow removal as soon as practicable. Look out for “black ice” which can occur when water from melting snow refreezes. It can be extremely difficult to see black ice on asphalt surfaces, especially when the sun goes down.
- Place absorbent mats at water fountains and water tables. Secure area rugs, especially at entranceways. Replace rugs that do not lay flat or show signs of deterioration.
- Use non-skid wax on floor surfaces, and document cleaning procedures. Maintain these records indefinitely, should you need them due to litigation or a future claim.
- Survey your building and grounds. Ensure gutter downspouts empty away from walking paths, sidewalks are free of defects, and stairs are equipped with sturdy handrails.

If you have a safety or risk management question or a suggestion for a topic, please contact Markel’s Risk Management Department at safety1st@markelcorp.com.