

## Wet Floors: An Occupational Hazard

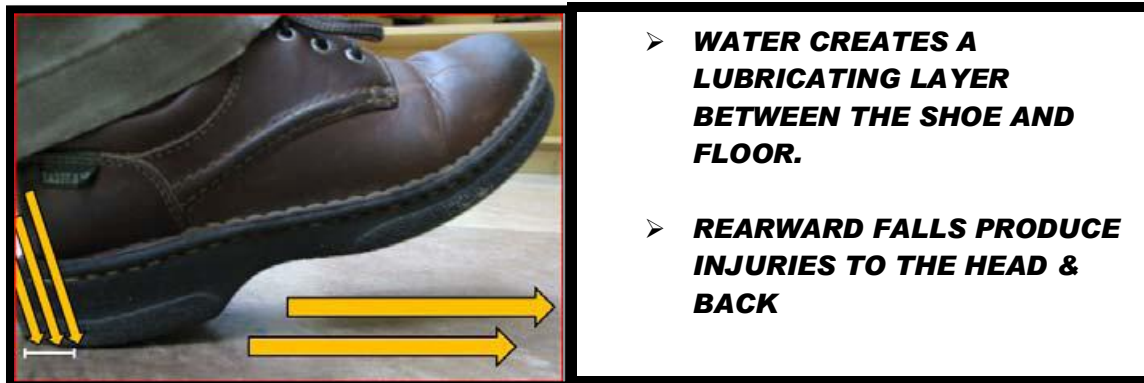
According to the US Department of Labor, STFs (slips, trips and falls) make up the majority of general industry accidents, which account for

- 15% of accidental deaths
- 25% of reported injury claims
- 65% of lost work days.

At the University of Rochester, STFs account for 20% of our total reported injuries, but 37% of our injury claim cost – an indication that the STFs reported at the University are one of our most severe employee injury causes.

STFs are caused by a variety of things including clutter, wrinkled carpeting, cords, uneven sidewalks and poor lighting. At UR, the #1 cause of STFs is wet floors.

When flat surfaces get wet, they get slippery. Our floors get wet from leaking equipment (e.g. refrigerators, pipes), mopping, spilled drinks, and weather (snow/rain) tracked in from outside. It only takes a bit of moisture to turn a dry floor into a hazardous slippery floor. Employees have fallen on as little as the juice from a slice of tomato at the salad bar.



An analysis of workers' compensation injury claims from acute care hospitals showed that STFs most often result in sprains, strains, dislocations and tears. In addition, STFs were significantly more likely to result in fractures and multiple injuries than other types of injuries.

Wet floors are preventable. To stop wet floors and protect other employees, our students, patients and visitors, each of us must take individual responsibility for prevention:

- If you are aware of leaking equipment, call Facilities at x3-4567 to get it repaired before someone falls.
- If you spill something, clean it up!
- Place wet floor signs on spills – and then clean the spills up ASAP. You can get help from Environmental Services by calling x3-4567.

- Waiting for mopped floors to dry? Use wet floor signs to block access if possible. Busy people have difficulty seeing signs.
- When the weather is wet, take time to dry your feet on the rug as you come through the door. If the floor / rug is wet and in need of service, call Facilities at x3-4567 and let them know.
- Protect yourself: wear slip-resistant footwear.

If we all pitch in, we can stop wet floors and the painful injuries they cause. Next time you see a wet floor, stop. Think of the consequences. Choose to act and prevent someone from getting hurt.