



Slips, Trips and Falls



Slips, Trips and Falls (STFs) are the leading cause of workplace injuries in the rail industry.

Since 2017, 31 % of all recorded injuries in the rail sector were due to STFs – that's 3,814 injuries, or 1.6 per day.

Poor lighting, poor hazard perception, misplaced equipment, weather conditions, and changes in the work environment or personal fatigue are common contributors.

STFs can happen anywhere – on track, in depots, offices or car parks, especially when moving between different environments or when tired. Prevention starts with awareness and proactive behaviour.

Did you know...

- Many STF incidents occur at the beginning or end of a shift or during transitions – such as starting or ending work, or moving between different environments (e.g. from vehicles, buildings or plant)
- Many STF incidents involve manual handling tasks – Fatigue and distraction also increase risk
- Most incidents occur in poorly lit areas, especially during seasonal transitions (e.g. dark winter evenings)
- Many of these injuries are preventable with pre-work checks and small changes to your actions.

Impact

- An injury could result in minor to severe injury to the person, which has the potential to cause undue stress if off work for long periods of time
- There are also hidden costs, such as expertise and experience lost, additional training required, temporary labour and overtime, which can introduce additional hazards to the workplace.



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What to do



What does 'good' look like?

Assess the environment and remove hazards

- Conduct a risk assessment and lighting survey for all work areas, including access and exit points
- Where possible, remove or avoid uneven or wet surfaces, trailing cables, equipment or materials, vegetation or any other obstacle that could cause someone to trip over
- Pay extra attention when entering or leaving different environments, or when feeling fatigued.

Plan the task

- Ensure the route is clear and well-lit
- Choose compliant footwear and PPE. Use battery-powered lighting or ensure cables are safely routed to avoid trip hazards
- Leave enough time in the plan for foot travel to and from the site of work
- Keep manual handling to a minimum and use other means of transporting loads. Plan all aspects of the job to avoid rushing and mistakes. Allow time for breaks and manage fatigue.

Communicate hazards

- Use signage or verbal briefings to highlight STF risks
- Brief team members to highlight trip hazards to each other as they pass them
- Use a 'spotter' to assist others who are carrying equipment or materials
- Report and escalate any issues promptly
- Team leaders should highlight changing hazards when activities or environments change. Staff should raise their awareness when starting something different.

Take action

- Remove obstructions
- Clean up spills promptly
- Use torches or headlamps in low-light areas in addition to any site lighting solutions.

Review and reflect

- After completing a task, review the area for new hazards
- Log any incidents or near misses in the safety reporting system.



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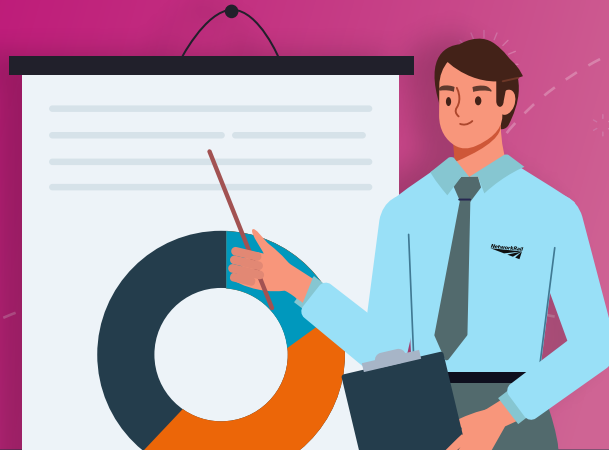


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What to do



Do

- ✓ Take 5 before starting a task – assess your surroundings, anticipate changes in your environment and your energy levels
- ✓ Use the correct lighting solutions for the work (See the 'How to' Lighting guide)
- ✓ Keep walkways clear and dry
- ✓ Wear compliant footwear with good grip
- ✓ Report STF hazards immediately
- ✓ Manage fatigue – take breaks, follow fatigue guidelines and watch for signs of tiredness.

Don't

- ✗ Don't use your mobile phone or tablet whilst walking
- ✗ Don't ignore poor lighting – it's a major contributor to STFs
- ✗ Don't leave tools, cables or materials in walkways
- ✗ Don't rush through unfamiliar or cluttered areas
- ✗ Don't assume others are aware of hazards – always communicate.

Questions to consider

1

Have you ever nearly slipped or tripped at work? What caused it?

2

What's one thing you could do today to reduce STF risks in your area?

3

How confident are you in spotting STF hazards before they cause harm?

4

How could you reduce the risk of slipping or falling when walking on stairs or entering/leaving vehicles?

5

Do you ever use your mobile phone whilst walking, what are the risks from doing this?

6

Do you leave enough time to travel to your various work locations? What are the risks of not leaving enough time?



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Resources



Resources and support



Useful Links

Visit the HSE site on Slips and Trips – [HSE Slips and Trips](#)

Visit the HSE Slips and Trips hazard spotting checklist – [Slips and Trips](#)

Visit the HSE – [Lighting at Work](#) guidance.



Network Rail Standards

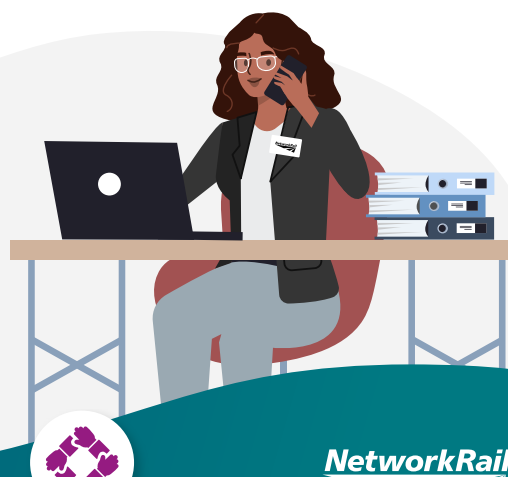
How to guide – Lighting Surveys

How to guide on Manual handling

NR/L2/ELP/27238/APP-G – Emergency lighting equipment

NR/L2/TRK/1019 – Lighting requirements for visual track inspection

Speak to your **local H&S Advisor** or **line manager** for support.



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