

22—Non-Employee Accident Prevention

disturbances, fatigue, lack of familiarity with the environment, and poor vision, which cannot be readily identified or controlled. It thus becomes doubly important to eliminate unsafe conditions and unsafe employee practices to which the blame for an accident can be shifted or which might contribute to the personal cause. As an example, mirrors and other distracting decorations should not be placed in areas visible from steps or from approaches to steps or escalators.

Types of floor surfaces

A wide variety of floor surfaces are available. In office buildings, hotels, mercantile, and similar establishments, it is common to find masonry (terrazzo, cement, or quarry tile) floors at entrances, in lobbies, on stairways, and sometimes extensively throughout the ground floor and in upper floor corridors. Decorative materials such as terrazzo, marble, and ceramic tile are most often used for interiors while concrete and granite are generally considered more practical for exterior use. Details are in Tables 22-B and -C.

In other public areas in these buildings, the base floor, usually of concrete or wood, is generally surfaced with one or more of the popular resilient floor covering materials. Carpeting is commonly used on limited areas in the department, furniture, specialty, and similar stores and in hotels. Elsewhere, asphalt, linoleum, rubber, or plastic in either sheet or tile form, will usually be found. Obviously, safety, initial cost, durability and maintenance costs are some factors which govern the choice of floor covering.

Most flooring materials, whether wood, masonry, or the resilient types, are reasonably slip resistant in their original untreated condition. Exceptions will be found among some of the masonry materials. A highly polished marble, terrazzo, or ceramic tile may be used to achieve an ornamental effect. These highly polished surfaces can be slippery when dry. Their slipperiness will be greatly increased by moisture, by improper surface treating preparations, and by improper cleaning materials and methods. Unless a non-slip material is added to the aggregate during construction, the only preparation which should be used on such floors is a penetrating sealer of the slip-resistant type.

Good housekeeping prevents falls

In food retail operations, stores, and mercantile establishments, it is estimated that fixtures, displays, and other portable equipment are involved in over 40 percent of customer falls. Therefore, it is essential that management provide safe equipment and that the accident control program place particular emphasis on safe placement and use of that equipment.

Dress racks and stock trucks should be removed from the sales area and returned to the stock room as soon as they have been emptied.

All electrical wiring and extension cords for store machines, displays, special decorations, and the like should be designed so as not to lie on the floor. Where necessary, wires or cords may be installed in low-profile channels.

A high percentage of falls is caused by low-profile stock left in aisles. Stock should be kept in large piles while employees are filling shelves or stock drawers, or dressing a display.

Stock containers, such as baskets, boxes, bags, trays, and cartons, must be removed from the aisles immediately after they have been emptied.

Poor housekeeping accounts for one-third or more of all customer falls. Each employee should be made to realize that it is part of his or her responsibility to maintain good housekeeping in his work area, to report promptly unsafe floor conditions, such as tears in carpets and holes in the floors. He should wipe up spills immediately, or else barricade them until the hazard can be removed. A special warning sign can be used (see Fig 22-4).

Floor coverings and mats

Reduce the possibility of slips and falls by using good carpeting, bound edging, and flush floor-level mats and runners (see Fig 22-6). If material such as an extruded metal runner is used to provide self-cleaning removal of snow, ice, or mud at entryways, it should be flush and not present a tripping hazard. Care also in the use of rubber mats, rug runners, and the like must be taken to prevent them from becoming tripping hazards. Oftentimes the edges become rumpled (Fig 22-2), corners and ends are torn or do not lie flat and excess wear can cause tears. Mats and