TOOLBOX TALK BRIEFKIT

Slips, Trips and Falls

A ready-to-deliver toolbox talk for foremen and supervisors. 8-10 minute spoken script plus briefing register for operative sign-in.

REFERENCE	TBT-SLIPS-TRIPS-AND-FALLS-001	**DURATION**	8-10 minutes
DATE		**SITE**	
TRAINER (PRINT)		**SIGNATURE**	

1 Why it matters

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 require workplaces to be kept in a safe condition for the people working in them, with floors free of obstructions, slip risks controlled, and routes properly maintained. CDM 2015 puts the same duty on the principal contractor and contractors for construction work. The HSE consistently reports slips trips and falls as the biggest single source of major and over-7-day injury on construction sites. The fix is almost always free or near-free; the cost of not fixing it is broken hips, snapped ankles, head injuries on edges, and sometimes (off stairs or scaffolds) fatalities.

2 PPE required for this task

- Hard hat
- Hi-vis vest
- Safety boots to BS EN ISO 20345 S3 with good tread, not worn smooth
- Gloves with grip (so you can use handrails properly)

3 The boring injury that ends careers

Around 30% of all reported workplace injuries in UK construction.

The boring injury that ends careers

Around a third of all reported workplace injuries in UK construction. The biggest single category.

4 The five controls for slips, trips and falls

Work down the list. Housekeeping is the single biggest control.

The five controls for slips, trips and falls

Work down the list. Housekeeping is the single biggest control.

1. KEEP IT CLEAR
Housekeeping every task, cables and hoses off the floor

2. KEEP IT DRY
Spills cleaned immediately, leaks reported, drainage maintained

3. LIGHT IT
Site lighting on before the dark shift, extra task lighting on stairs

4. MARK IT
Cones, tape and signs for hazards that can't be removed

5. DRESS FOR IT
Safety boots with grip, soles checked at start of shift

5 What to say

Spoken script for the supervisor. Read or paraphrase, in order.

1 Why we take the boring injury seriously

A fall from a 6-metre roof gets everyone's attention. A trip over a trailing cable that lands you on your hip doesn't. But the bloke with the broken hip is still off work for 12 weeks, still ends up with arthritis at 55, still loses earnings he doesn't get back. Slips, trips and falls on the same level account for around 30% of all reported workplace injuries and they're the single biggest cause of major injury in construction. We're going to talk about how almost all of them are preventable with five simple things.

2 The three categories

Slips happen when your foot loses grip on the surface. Wet floors, mud, ice, polished concrete, leaking hydraulic fluid, dust on smooth surfaces. Trips happen when your foot catches on something it didn't expect. Trailing cables, offcuts, edges of plywood sheets, raised covers, kerbs at the wrong height, change in surface level. Same-level falls are the ones where you end up on the floor in the same place you were standing. Different from falls from height, which we covered in the working at height talk. Most STF injuries are same-level falls, and that's where this talk focuses.

3 Why construction sites are worse than other workplaces

An office floor is the same on Wednesday as it was on Monday. A construction site changes hourly. The ground that was firm at 8am is muck at 11am because the wagon came in. The route that was clear at lunch is full of timber cuts by 3pm because the brickie is cracking on. Multiple trades, multiple cables, multiple materials, multiple weathers. The default state of a busy site is hazardous; keeping it safe is active work, not passive.

4 The five controls (in order)

First: keep it clear. Housekeeping is the single biggest STF control there is. End of every task, end of every shift, the area you've worked in is left tidier than you found it. Offcuts in the skip, cables coiled, hoses up off the floor, materials stacked back where they belong. Second: keep it dry. Spills cleaned immediately, not at the end of the shift. Hydraulic leaks reported the moment they're spotted. Rainwater funnelled away from walkways. Third: light it. Stairs and changes of level get extra task lighting in winter. Site lighting working before the dark shift starts, not when someone falls. Fourth: mark it. Hazards that can't be removed get cones, tape, signage. The temporary hole, the change of level, the wet patch that hasn't dried, all flagged so people see them. Fifth: dress for it. Safety boots with grip, not boots worn smooth. Soles checked at start of every shift. Replaced before they fail.

5 Stairs: the single biggest STF source

More serious STF injuries happen on stairs than anywhere else on site. Specifically: scaffold stairs (treads with grit worn off), site cabin steps (poorly fixed and slippery in rain), stairs with no nosings (where your eye can't see the edge), stairs being used to carry materials (one hand on the load, no hand on the rail). Rules: hand on the rail every time, no carrying materials up or down by hand if a hoist or trolley exists, never run on stairs, replace worn tread covers immediately, never let workers carry materials taller than chest height (they can't see the next step).

6 Weather: the predictable problem

Rain, ice and frost turn ordinary surfaces into ice rinks. Steel deck on a frosty morning. Polythene sheet over excavated ground after rain. Clean tile in a finished interior with wet boots tracked in. Wood ramps with no grip strip. The fix is anticipation: grit out before the frost, drainage maintained, mats at entrances, wet boot covers off in finished areas, work scheduled around weather where possible. Specifically: if forecast says ice tonight, grit gets put out before everyone goes home, not at 6am tomorrow when someone's already on the deck.

7 Footwear: when boots aren't enough

Safety boots to BS EN ISO 20345 S3 are the baseline (covered in the PPE talk). But even good boots wear out. Soles go smooth after 6-12 months of heavy use. Check them at start of every shift: tread visible, no bald patches, sole intact, no splits. If they're worn smooth, you're walking in trainers. Some surfaces need extra: ice cleats for genuinely icy work, slip-on overshoes with extra grip for finished tile floors. If you're regularly working in wet ground, S5 wellingtons rather than S3 leather are right.

8 Pay attention as you walk

Most STF injuries happen because someone was looking at their phone, talking to a mate, carrying something that blocked their view, or just on autopilot. The site you walk around isn't a static thing. Look where your feet are going. Look one step ahead. If you're carrying something tall, walk slower and take known routes. If you're in a hurry, you're more likely to fall. Five seconds saved by cutting across the timber stack costs three months of rehab on a broken ankle.

6 Common mistakes to call out

Leaving offcuts and packaging where they land instead of binning as you go

Trailing cables and hoses across walkways at ankle height (the classic trip hazard)

Wet spills left to dry on their own ("someone will deal with it")

Hydraulic leaks ignored as not your problem (your problem when someone goes over)

Stairs used to carry materials that need two hands (one hand on the rail is non-negotiable)

Worn-smooth safety boots not replaced until they fail (replace before, not after)

Site lighting not switched on early enough in winter (dark before 4pm, lights need to be on)

Mud and water trafficked into finished areas without boot covers or mats

Phones in hand while walking around site (look where you're going)

Running on stairs, on scaffold, on uneven ground (no urgency justifies it)

7 Watch on site this week

What the supervisor should be actively spotting on walk-arounds.

Walkways with cables, hoses, or material lying across them

Wet patches that have been there since morning

Stair nosings worn or missing (grit strip on scaffold stairs)

Operatives carrying material with one hand on the rail and one occupied

Boots with worn or smooth soles

Lighting out in a stairwell, corridor, or scaffold stair tower

Mud trafficked into a finished area where the next trade is wearing clean boots

Off-cuts and packaging accumulating near the workstation rather than going in the skip

Anyone running on site for any reason

Edge transitions (kerb, step, change of surface) without visible marking

8 Confirm the team understood

Ask one or two of these at the end of the talk.

1. What's the rough percentage of all reported workplace injuries in UK construction that are slips, trips or same-level falls? (Around 30%, the biggest single category.)
2. What are the five controls in order? (Keep it clear, keep it dry, light it, mark it, dress for it.)
3. What's the rule for stairs? (One hand on the rail every time, no carrying materials that need both hands.)
4. What's the standard you check your safety boots are to, and what's a sign they need replacing? (BS EN ISO 20345 S3 minimum. Sole tread worn smooth, splits in the upper, toecap showing through.)

Briefing register: Slips, Trips and Falls

All operatives who attend this toolbox talk must sign below. Their signature confirms they have heard and understood the briefing.

Briefing delivered by:

Name (print):		**Date:**	
Signature:		**Time:**	
Site:			

Attendees. I confirm I have heard and understood the briefing detailed above:

#	Name (print)	Company / Role	Signature	Date	CSCS / Ticket No.
1					
2					
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Keep this register in the site Safety File. Additional sheets may be appended if more than 12 operatives are briefed.