

## A Guide to Anti-Slip & Trip Issues in Food Production Areas



### Why is it important to tackle slip and trip risks especially in the Food Industry?

- They are the largest cause of serious injury in the industry, with a high rate in all sectors of food production and drink.
- They occur four times more often than the average for industry, being the single main cause of the relatively high injury rate in the food and drink industry.
- They result in significant financial losses which are estimated at £22 million annually to employers in the food and drinks industry. These costs are the result of compensation claims, legal costs, increased insurance premiums and legal actions. In addition the loss of key staff, short and long term can have a major effect on the financial performance of companies, along with Individual suffering, some cases results in long term disability and loss of employment.

### Legal Requirements

The workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) regulations 1992 requirements for the construction of the floor surface to be suitable by not being 'slippery so as to expose any person to a risk to their safety' and for the floor to have 'effective drainage' are absolute. This duty can be met by preventing contamination rather than increasing slip resistance to counteract it.

The workplace regulations also absolutely requires the floor construction to have 'no holes, or slope or be uneven so as to expose a person to risk' and so far as reasonably practicable to keep floors 'free of obstructions and from any article which may cause a person to ..... trip' and 'waste materials shall not be allowed to accumulate except in suitable receptacles'.

### Main Causes of Slip and Trip Injuries

Most slips (90%) occur when the floor is wet with water, contaminated with food product or the wrong type of flooring system installed.

Most trips (75%) are caused by obstructions, the remainder by uneven surfaces and lack of surface maintenance.

## Managing the Risks

### Prevention of Slips

- Install the correct type of flooring to meet the legal requirements.
- Eliminate contamination of the floor from water or food product. Particular attention should be paid to leak and spillage prevention, eg. By the location of drainage channels or gullies, along with equipment maintenance to prevent product build up on the floor surface.
- Safe cleaning methods, minimising the effect of product spillages which should be cleaned immediately. Please refer to Cleaning Recommendation of John Lord Rizistal Resin and Tiling Floor Systems.
- Select suitable footwear as the effectiveness of shoes soles to prevent slips varies considerably. In general, softer soles (eg. Microcellular urethane with a good pattern) are least slippery on wet floors. Replace them before they have worn smooth, provide all visitors with the correct type of footwear.
- It is important that walkways are kept clear of contamination (eg. Bunds around equipment, drainage channels, foot baths to clean incoming footwear).
- Carrying loads or pushing/pulling trolleys increases the slip risk, tasks should be mechanised where possible.
- Tasks in slip risk areas should only be allocated to those competent to follow slip precautions.
- Provide adequate lighting and see environmental demands, do not distract attention from the floor condition.

- Ensure regular inspection and maintenance of the floor surface to ensure floor has sufficient surface roughness, floors which may become water contaminated should have at least 20 microns roughness (R<sub>tm</sub>). Such roughness is microscopic and does not prevent hygienic cleaning of the floor. Please refer to John Lord Technical Department for the correct type of flooring system for your particular requirement.

### Prevention of Trips

- Eliminate holes, slopes or uneven surfaces which could cause trip risks. This should be done by regular inspection and maintenance of the floor surface. Highlight any changes in level and make slopes gradual and any steps clearly visible, open gullies and channels should not be allowed.
- Eliminate materials, equipment or product likely to cause tripping.
- Mark walkways, working areas and receptacle locations and make sure they are kept free of obstructions.
- Ensure suitable lighting to allow any obstructions to be seen.

Train, inform and supervise employees, slips and trips injuries can be prevented in the food industry; they are not inevitable.