

PREVENTING SLIPS/ TRIPS AND FALLS IN PARKING LOTS

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BACKGROUND

A large number of slip/trip and fall accidents occur each year in parking lots. Layout, maintenance and weather conditions are the primary factors involved in these falls.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Parking lot design considerations that affect the occurrence of slip/trip and fall accidents include pedestrian access, walkway arrangement, size of parking spaces and driving aisles, and position of curbs and islands.

In larger lots, the walking route from a parked car to the building should be clearly identified and free of obstacles. Less congestion and improving visibility will minimize potential for these incidents. The American Institute of

Architects recommends parking spaces that are 19 feet deep and 9 feet wide. The driving aisles between rows of cars should be at least 24 feet wide.

CONTROL MEASURES

A three-step approach to reducing parking lot slips/trips and falls includes:

- Identifying the hazard
- Eliminating or minimizing the hazard
- Warning against the hazard if cost-effective controls cannot be found

Hazards such as large potholes and broken walking surfaces are readily identifiable and should be corrected as quickly as possible before an incident occurs. Other hazards such as inadequate lighting, poorly placed or maintained wheel stops and speed bumps, and drainage problems may only become evident after an accident occurs. Thorough accident investigation and review of loss trends will help you discover the underlying causes of your slip/trip and fall incidents. Eliminating the true causes of accidents will prevent recurrence.

The following chart includes some typical factors that can increase the likelihood of slip/trip and fall incidents in parking lots and suggested corrective measures:

CONTRIBUTING FACTOR	CORRECTIVE MEASURE
Housekeeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trash, loose sand or gravel, mulch from landscaping, leaves and other materials present much greater slip/trip and fall hazards and should be cleaned up on a daily basis. Larger lots may require commercial sweepers and scrubbers.
Surface maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check regularly for cracks, depressions and other uneven surfaces especially at the transitions between asphalt and concrete walkways. • Repair potholes within 24 hours.
Snow and ice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish procedures for snow and ice removal. • Obtain written contract with proper risk transfer from snow removal contractor. • Make available salt, sand or other materials for thawing and refreezing problems.
Rain or other moisture problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that roof drains do not discharge across sidewalks or into parking areas. • Eliminate pooling and puddling problems by repaving and filling depressions.
Elevation changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paint curbs, islands, ramps and other elevation changes a contrasting color. • Provide curb cutouts for wheelchair access.
Wheel stops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not use, if at all possible. Unnecessary in properly designed lots. If present, properly maintained and painted a contrasting color. • Not placed in pedestrian walkways. • Minimum of 3 feet between wheel stops and not cross over painted parking lane stripes. • Properly anchored to lot surface
Speed bumps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painted a contrasting color. • Provide three-foot clear space at the ends of each speed bump for safe pedestrian crossing.
Utility covers and drain grates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure they are flush with walking surface. • Paint contrasting color around edges. • Properly maintain and ensure no openings in the grate greater than one inch.
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain adequate lighting in all areas. Minimum of one foot candle. • Establish light bulb inspection and replacement criteria.

Design: [Graphic Design Centre](#)

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Allianz Global Corporate & Specialty SE, Global Communications, Dieselstrasse 8, 85774 Unterfoehring, Germany

Commercial Register: Munich, HRB 208312