



Incident investigation case example: Slip and fall

A food services worker was walking past the entrance to the bathing/tub room. The worker slipped and fell, suffering a contusion to the elbow.

An investigation seeks to find the cause of an incident by asking a series of questions. Here are some examples of questions that can be asked when investigating a slip and fall incident. If the answer to any of the questions below is “No,” the next question should be “Why.” The question of “Why” may have to be asked a few times to find the true cause of the issue.

Job

- Is water outside the bathing/tub room a new issue? If so, what has changed?
- Did the water originate from the tub room, or did it come from somewhere else?
- Is the water a result of a leak?
- Is the bathing process designed to minimize the amount of water tracked out of the room?
- How quickly are reported spills cleaned up?
- Is there a mop or squeegee in the tub room that allows water to be cleaned up immediately?
- Is signage or barriers available to block off the spill until it is cleaned up?



Organization

- Have similar incidents resulted in corrective action?
- Do workplace inspections include slip and fall hazards?
- Does facility maintenance focus on spills?
- Were procedures for reporting spills followed?
- Had the water been reported before the worker slipped? If so, were people warned about it (e.g., was signage or barriers put in place?)
- Are temporary steps taken to make areas safer until more permanent solutions can be implemented?



Individual

- Was the worker aware that there is a higher risk of slipping by the tub room?
- Was the worker rushed or distracted while moving through this area?
- Was the worker wearing appropriate footwear with non-slip soles?



Conclusions

The following provides two possible outcomes from an incident investigation. The incomplete investigation focuses on the worker's actions and therefore the corrective action centres on the worker. The more

thorough investigation delved deeper into what conditions were present when the worker slipped and therefore the subsequent corrective actions address these conditions.

Cause(s)	Corrective action(s)
Incomplete investigation	
The worker wasn't paying attention while walking in the corridor.	Ask the worker to pay more attention while walking. Ask other workers to be more careful as well.
Thorough investigation	
Some of the water that accumulated outside the tub room came from a slow leak from a pipe connection at the back of the tub.	Ask maintenance to fix the leaking pipe.
	Change the bathing procedure to minimize the amount of water that is tracked out into the halls.
Some water was tracked out while moving residents from the tub room.	At the end of the bathing procedure, add a visual inspection and mop-up where water leaves the room.
	Warn staff to watch for slip hazards near the tub room, and to mark and report slip hazards as soon as possible (or fix them, where possible).
	Update inspection checklists to include assessment of slip hazards.
	Assess how communication is gathered and shared on the unit. Assess bathing routines for other residents.



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