



## **Slip, Trip and Fall Prevention**

A slip, trip and fall can result in serious injuries, particularly if it involves the elderly. If someone is injured in a slip, trip and fall, you must be prepared to demonstrate that an appropriate standard of care was provided.

A regular inspection program encompassing your buildings and surrounding property will reduce the risk of a trip and fall incident occurring.

### **Program Requirements:**

1. Implement a written policy that outlines when the property (grounds and building) is to be inspected. Inspections should be done monthly as a minimum, and detailing who is responsible. Ensure staff have read and understood the policy.
2. Develop a log sheet to be used by the staff performing the inspection. This log should include a list of areas inspected; contain spaces to write the condition as found, corrective action taken, the date and time of the inspection, and the name and signature of the inspector. Logs should be kept on file for seven years.

### **Areas of attention could include:**

- Parking lots whether paved or not, should be checked regularly during the year. Any ruts, pot holes, cracked, broken or unstable pavement surfaces should be patched. Gravel parking lots should be leveled with fresh gravel. Parking areas, walkways and entrances (outside and inside) should be well lit.
- Carpet and floors in general should be inspected to ensure the surfaces are even and not damaged. In order to remove moisture and slush from footwear, and help to keep floors dry, install heavy rubber backed mats during the winter months that must be changed when they become saturated. A caution sign should be placed in the immediate area indicating that the floor is wet. This will act as an alert to parishioners to watch their step. The condition of the floor should be checked frequently, particularly during times of heavy use.
- Stairways both exterior and interior should be examined to ensure that there are no loose or worn treads. Hand rails should be kept in good condition, and free of ice as well. If repairs are not possible, access to that entrance should be restricted.
- Wheel chair ramps should be kept in good condition, and any non slip surface treatment should be maintained. Pay attention to wear on concrete surfaces. Wheel Chair ramps are a particular concern because of their inherent design (i.e. an inclined ramp). Because of this, sanding and salting may be necessary on a more frequent basis to keep the ramp clear and accessible. In addition, able bodied parishioners should be discouraged from using the ramp during the winter months.

- Walkways often can become a problem arrival of the spring thaw. Frost heaving can affect concrete panels and pavers making the surfaces uneven. On a walkway made from pavers, take a look at the alignment of the pavers along the path and from side to side. If there are areas where there is an abrupt change in elevation, such changes should be marked with warning signs, if people frequently walk there. Cracks, depressions and pot holes in parking areas should be leveled and patched.
- Ensure that contractors and staff understand the necessity to monitor the weather conditions and adjust how frequently they check the property. On sunny days, or days where the temperature goes above freezing, watch for “refreezing” during the late afternoon and evening hours when the temperature dips back below freezing. This refreezing can lead to the formation of patches of very clear ice (known as black ice). During such weather more frequent checks, salting and sanding are necessary as meltwater will wash the salt away during the day. Keep all drains and catchbasins clear of ice and snow. Remember standing water can hide an icy surface. Position downspouts so that water cannot collect on walkways during thaws. Watch for the formation of frost during late fall or early spring, as frost can also create slippery conditions.
- The surrounding grounds, and cemeteries should be surveyed to ensure that there are no open holes, subsidence of land, exposed tree trunks/ roots or the remains of old posts.
- Garden equipment should be removed to storage when not in use. Debris should not be allowed to collect on your property. Trees should be pruned to ensure that dead branches won’t break off during severe weather, or interfere with people walking under the trees.
- Inside the church, the floors around the entrances should be checked for damage from salt and moisture and repaired. The condition of the floors inside each entrance should also be checked regularly. Water should not be allowed to accumulate.

### **Educating Your Parishioners**

- Educate your parishioners about the need for special care when walking during the winter months. Often, people are slow to adjust to the changing weather conditions. They should be reminded to “slow down” in winter. An ideal time for such advice may be at the end of the service.
- Parishioners should be encouraged to wear appropriate footwear during the winter months.
- Parishioners should be encouraged to advise the Church if they see conditions that could lead to a slip and fall.