

Tribometry - Controlling Slips and Falls on Walking Surfaces

Slip and fall accidents account for over 40% of the total workers' compensation dollars spent in the U.S. hospitality industry, claims average approximately \$5,400 per incident, and slip-and-fall injuries rank among the top five in regards to both frequency and severity each year.

The risk of slip-and-fall injuries is a serious Workers' Compensation and General Liability issue for those within the Hospitality & Gaming Industry. While the industry has always had a large exposure to slip and fall hazards to employees, contractors, and guests, recent changes, including additional services and amenities designed to attract new clients, have made managing this exposure even more difficult. Adding to that challenge, "Baby Boomers" will double in population in the coming decades, potentially doubling the frequency of General Liability slip/fall claims, and at least the same for incurred. Some clients are already seeing the rise.

Tribometry

Tribometry – the measurement of walking surface slip resistance – and Tribometers – aka slipmeters – coupled with consensus standards on what constitutes a "safe" walking surface, provide an effective means to measure, evaluate and control slips and falls. The science and experience that underpin this also serve to guide elimination of walking surface hazards, as well as evaluation of existing walking surfaces, selection of next-generation floor surfaces, cleaning products and cleaning methods, and provide objectivity in litigated claims.



Marsh's Workforce Strategies Practice has expertise in the field of Tribometry and can work with you to ensure that your slip and fall program consists of the essential elements of a proper program including, but not limited to:

- evaluation of current and future floor surfaces, cleaning methods, and cleaning products;
- slip resistance testing to evaluate slip resistance on polished stone floors in lobbies and public access venues as well as hard floors at a determined frequency;
- an analysis of your current needs in regards to slip and fall management and safety;
- development of slip and fall policies and procedures specific to your organization;
- training for employees and management personnel on Tribometry, slip and fall policies, procedures, responsibilities, liability issues, due diligence, and prevention measures;
- post-injury slip and fall assessments;
- establishing and maintaining a database for floor slip resistance measurements;
- expert witness testimony available as required;
- informational updates on trends and developments in the areas of safety and slips and falls; and
- access to technical expertise.

In the U.S., Workforce Strategies uses the English XL Variable Incidence Tribometer, a slip-meter that yields valid results in real-world dry and wet conditions.

Using the English XL Variable Incidence Tribometer, our risk consultants can accurately and reliably measure the dry and wet slip resistive qualities of a walking surface, the chemistry used to clean a floor or the cleaning methods; a capability that allows us to better advise our clients on selecting the appropriate controls.

CASE STUDY

A beach resort hospitality client with very high General Liability claims frequency and incurred requested an evaluation of their current ceramic tile used throughout the property. Guests were falling on the glazed ceramic tile when wet, so their recourse was to offer guests slippers which also proved slippery under wet conditions. They requested Workforce Strategies perform a multi-variable evaluation of the ceramic tile, dry and wet, five types of slippers and two surface treatment products alleged to improve wet slip resistance. The consultants found best dry and wet performance of ceramic tile, slipper and surface treatment, helping the hotel reduce GL slip/fall claims and incurred nearly to zero.

CASE STUDY

A national restaurant chain was evaluating several floor surface types for future generation stores. A senior executive liked one based solely on appearance. Our tribometry services intercepted that decision by showing it to have the worst wet slip resistance of the possible choices. The results gave them objective information to make a more informed business decision.

Employers and business owners cannot control all the factors contributing to slips/falls, e.g. guest footwear, but certainly most. They can strive for a better

balance between visual appearance and safety, set standards for slip resistive qualities of walking surfaces, more objectively select cleaning products, cleaning methods or treatments that optimize slip resistance, select slip resistive footwear, educate their people on the impact of slips/falls to their bottom line, and most importantly protect the brand name. It all begins with measurement.

"Measurement is the heart of control. If you can measure it, you can control it"

Virtually any client with slip and fall exposures or Workers' Compensation and General Liability claims history can benefit from Marsh Tribometry services. If you would like to learn more about Tribometry or slip and fall prevention, please contact:

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