



Flooring plays a critical role in creating a safe working environment. However, employers and workers often focus on the danger that chemicals, machinery and equipment may cause and overlook the floor beneath them. Ignoring the hazards can lead to:



Increased risk of slips, trips and falls

Employees, customers and visitors could get injured on site, which may result in compensation claims or lawsuits, as well as a damaged reputation. In addition, the facility may have to undergo inspections and face penalties for non-compliance.



Damage to machinery and equipment

Vehicle tyres can get damaged if having to constantly drive over bumpy or uneven flooring, resulting in increased maintenance costs. By using the incorrect type of flooring, computers and other equipment with electrical components can be damaged by destructive electrostatic discharge (ESD).

When working in a facility it is easy to ignore seemingly minor hazards - and these may even go unnoticed for long periods of time. However, they often result in workplace accidents and injuries. Assessing and addressing flooring issues is critical to ensuring the safety of people and vehicles.

FLOORING SAFETY TIPS

Housekeeping

- Set a regular floor cleaning schedule, depending on factors like facility size, traffic patterns and peak hours.
- Clean up spills immediately to prevent accidents. While cleaning, ensure that barricades are placed in the work area to redirect pedestrians.
- Different types of floors require different cleaning methods and products. Whether the cleaning team is in-house or outsourced, it helps to have written floor-cleaning procedures that are updated as needed e.g. if a floor surface is changed or new cleaning chemicals are introduced.

Signage

- Floor markings boost safety in hazardous areas by informing employees of potential risks and enable people to navigate areas, improving their safety, productivity and efficiency. Other areas of the workplace that will benefit from floor markings are emergency exits, storage areas, pathways and aisles.
- Signs can be portable cones or stickers and markings on the walls and floor. The most important thing is that the signs are well labelled and clearly visible to draw attention to and guide movement around obstacles.

Anti-Slip Coatings and Mats

- Anti-slip coatings and mats increase floor traction, minimising the risk of slips and falls.
- Anti-slip mats provide extra traction underfoot, preventing people from slipping easily and do not require special installation. They can be a good addition to a facility's entrance, high-traffic spaces or high-risk areas. However, they are not as durable as coatings and may need frequent replacement.

Lighting

- Improve visibility by keeping pathways, aisles, stairs and other critical areas well-lit (obstacles can easily be hidden in darkness and shadows).
- Floor lights, spotlights and luminous / reflective guide tapes can also assist by helping individuals identify and avoid potential slipping and tripping hazards.

You cannot put a price on safety. Flooring that does not fit its intended purpose or is beyond repair, should be replaced.



Department of Employment
and Labour Approved
Inspection Authority
(OH0049-CI-09)



OH0049



OHAIA-A 005 (2025)



The main aim of workplace first aid is to preserve life, prevent the condition from worsening and promote recovery.

Provision of first aid, first aid boxes and equipment for the Workplace is addressed by prescriptions of the General Safety Regulation (GSR) 3 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (Act 85 of 1993).

Workplaces with ten or more employees must have at least one trained first-aider for every group of fifty employees. In the case of shops and offices, the employer needs to appoint at least one first-aider for every 100 employees.

The Department of Employment and Labour (DoEL) requires that first aid training providers must be both SETA and DoEL accredited.

First-aiders must complete certified first aid training, undergo regular refresher courses to maintain their skills, and should be readily available during normal working hours (as this is a compulsory legal appointment).

MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS

Companies are required to assess the specific risks associated with their work environment, to determine whether more specialised or advanced first aid training is required.

Where pesticides, hazardous chemical agents or hazardous biological agents are used, handled, processed or manufactured, the first-aiders should be trained in the first aid procedures that are necessary for the treatment of injuries that may result from such activities.

FIRST AID KITS

First aid Kits must be readily available and fully stocked in any workplace with five or more employees. Regular inspections of kits and equipment ensures that equipment is in good working order, that the kit contains the prescribed "minimum contents" items and also that expired items are discarded and replaced. The minimum contents of first aid kits are contained in the Annexure in the General Safety Regulations of the OHS Act.

IMPORTANT

LEGAL UPDATES

 **29 August, 2025**

Electrical & Electronic Waste

The Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment has published the National Policy for the management of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment for implementation.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT: WASTE ACT 59 OF 2008
Government Notice 6554 in Government Gazette 53243

 **29 August, 2025**

Food Losses & Waste

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment has published the Strategy for reducing Food Losses and Waste.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT: WASTE ACT 59 OF 2008
Government Notice 6556 in Government Gazette 53243

To ensure proper record-keeping, it is advisable to make use of a formal first aid register. This could provide useful information for health and safety investigations, as well as the logging of compensation claims. The first aid register should be kept in or close to the first aid box.

Properly trained first-aiders, well-stocked kits and effective emergency procedures create a safer environment that minimises risks, protects lives and supports a culture of safety in the workplace.

<https://firstaidfirstaid.co.za/blog/first-aid-training-requirements/>
<https://labourguide.co.za/health-and-safety/update-first-aid-and-aid-boxes>



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