

Safety in Using Floor Mats

LIABILITY LOSS CONTROL MANAGEMENT

For Dentists' Offices GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR

USE OF FLOOR MATS ON HARD SURFACE FLOORS

With respect to preventing slips and falls, floor mats are generally used for two purposes:

- (1) To absorb water (liquids, snow/ice melt, mud); and
- (2) To remove moisture and foreign substances from shoe soles and heels.

Mats should be used at building or office entrances. There should be sufficient covering by mats to accomplish the purposes stated above. During inclement weather, additional mats should be used. **These mats should extend far enough into the building or office that foreign materials on shoes are absorbed before the soles and heels contact the hard surface floors.**

Mats should be heavy enough that the ends and sides do not curl up.

Mats should have an anti-slip backing so that they do not slip as people step on them.

The walking surfaces of the mats should have a coefficient of friction (COF) of at least 0.5. This level of slip resistance meets ADA guidelines (OSHA 1910.22). (The table below presents the COF values and associated risk.)

COEFFICIENT OF FRICTION TABLE

| | |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| .60 or above | - Very safe |
| .50 to .59 | - Relatively safe |
| .40 to .49 | - Dangerous |
| .35 to .39 | - Very dangerous |
| .00 to .34 | - Unusually dangerous |

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Mats should be cleaned (or removed and replaced) with sufficient frequency to eliminate the build-up of moisture and foreign matter on the walking surface of the mats (maintain the 0.5 COF).

The areas where mats are used should be well-lighted (2.0 foot-candles). Dim lighting of walking surfaces has been considered negligence.

Maintain logs showing maintenance, housekeeping, and mat/floor surface inspection activities. Such documentation can be valuable in defending a claim.

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