Staples Business Advantage

Keep Your Facility Safe & OSHA Compliant

A workplace safety solutions guide from Staples Business Advantage

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Ensuring the physical safety of every person on your property is a daily priority for facility managers (FMs). We all know why it should be a priority. The challenge for most FMs is knowing how to make it a priority.

Here, we'll explore some specific actions you can take to make your facility safer for tenants, employees and visitors.

Preventing slips and falls is a smart place to start. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), floors and flooring materials contribute directly to more than 2 million fall-related injuries each year.

We'll also help you become aware of government safety standards, and we'll provide some tips on how you can make sure your facility complies with them.

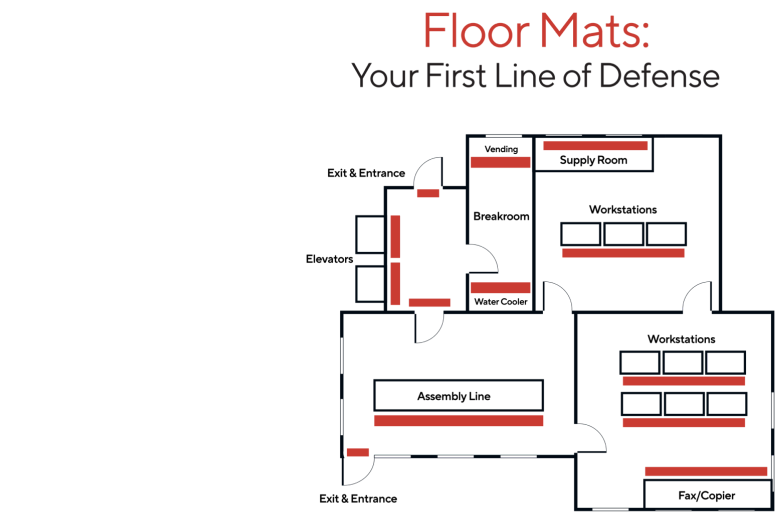
Floor Mats: Your First Line of Defense

ISSA, the worldwide cleaning industry association, estimates that 60% of bacteria and debris are carried into a building via shoes. So, the best way to prevent slips inside the building is to prevent all the outside stuff from getting in.

The solution is simple: **floor mats**.

Floor mats often have different names. **Sometimes they're called wiper/scraper mats or walk-off mats.** They clean debris and bacteria from shoes to prevent them from spreading throughout your facility.

Placing a **rubber floor mat** on the outside of an entryway will give employees and guests a place to remove debris from their shoes. A **carpeted floor mat** on the interior side of the entryway helps to prevent water from accumulating on the floor.

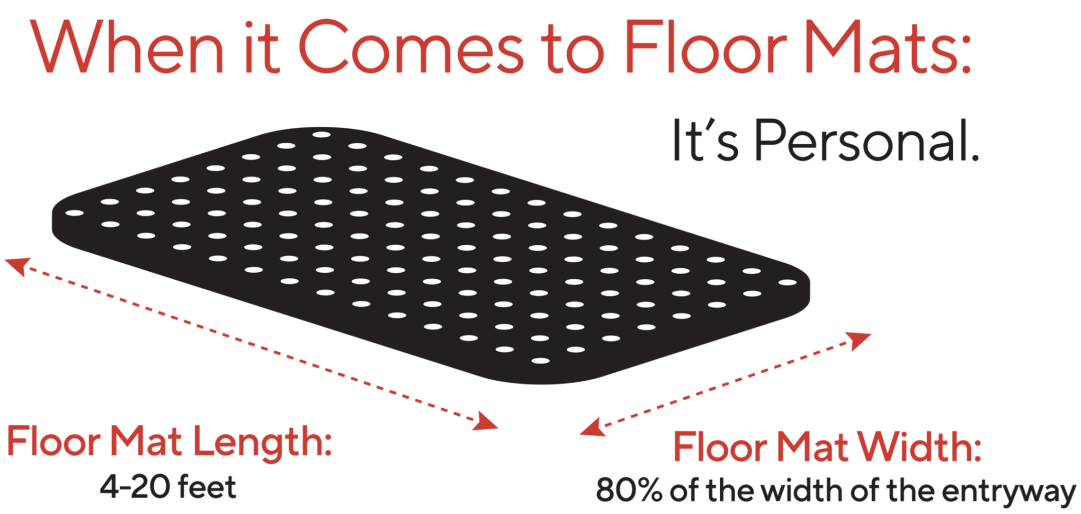


Your interior floor mats should be sized specifically for your entryways.

The general rule is the width of the **floor mat** should be at least 80% of the width of the entryway.

If you have a standard exterior door that's three feet wide (36 inches), then your mat should be at least 28.8 inches wide. Do you have entryways with two doors? Double the width of your floor mats (57.6 inches).

If the width of the mat is too narrow, it won't provide enough surface area for people to easily step onto to wipe off their shoes.



Now let's look at the length of the mats.

Ideally, your mat should easily allow a person to step on it twice (once for each foot). A length of at least six feet should be adequate to accomplish that two-step goal. Industry surveys reveal that six feet of floor matting removes about 40% of debris from shoes.

Buy why stop there? If you have the entryway floor space available, increase the length of your **interior floor mats**. Twenty feet of floor matting can remove 80% of the gunk you don't want on your floors.

The Top Two Reasons
to Install Longer Entryway Floor Mats

A 6′ floor mat removes about 40% of debris from shoes.
A 20′ floor mat can remove 80%

Source: ISSA, The Value of Clean, How Cleaning Enhances Workplace Safety.

Wet Floor Signs

US courts of law have established that property owners are required to keep their buildings safe. If a person is injured on the property, the owners may be subject to legal recourse.

Plus, it only takes a quarter cup of water to saturate an area three feet wide, which is all the help gravity needs to cause a fall inside.

It's no accident that most premises' liability cases include slips and falls. Any time you come across a wet floor in your facility, it becomes your duty to protect all persons currently on the premises from the hazard.

Just a Little H2O.

A quarter-cup of water can saturate a floor area three feet wide.

SOURCE: National Floor Safety Institute

The first step is making people aware of the hazard with an iconic yellow "**Wet Floor**" sign. And unlike other communication signage, such as "STOP" or "No Trespassing," people tend to notice and pay attention to the wet-floor signs.

Wet floors could **cost you $45,000***.
A wet-floor sign runs **about $20**.
Which would you rather spend?

* The national median court settlement for non-fatal slip-and-fall premises liability cases is $45,000.

When to Place Wet-Floor Signs

1. When Mopping

Place the sign before mopping to mark which areas of the floor are or will soon be slippery. Leave the signs up over areas that you have mopped, placed 10-15 feet apart to mark further wet-floor areas.

2. When a Puddle Is Detected or Created

It's no surprise that 100% of people surveyed prefer to be informed of a slippery floor via the yellow sign versus discovering it right before they slip. Whenever there's a puddle, place a **wet-floor sign** over it. Leave the sign in place for up to an hour after the puddle is mopped away.

3. When Water Is Tracked in From Outside

The minute bad weather hits, get the yellow signs ready. Place them at every entrance.

4. Until the Mop Water Evaporates

Mopping can clean up other spills and keep your floors clean on a day-to-day basis, but it still leaves some water behind, which is a hazard until the floor is dry. Don't move the sign until the dry part happens.

Once the sign is in place, a puddle of any origin becomes an identifiable hazard for everyone in the building. You have fulfilled the first part of your duty: you made them aware.

When to Use Sorbents on Spills

Sometimes, the moisture on the floor can't be reduced or removed by mopping. This usually happens when hazardous materials have been spilled. **Sorbents** allow you to contain the spill quickly by absorbing (or sometimes adsorbing) the liquid.

The easiest way to choose the right sorbent is to simply read the label — most sorbent products indicate the specific type of spills they remove.

For example, oil-selective sorbents soak up oil, leaving other fluids behind. General-purpose sorbents can handle most water-based fluids. Some sorbents are specifically formulated to solidify blood spills. And other sorbents are made to help with odor elimination.

The versatility of sorbents comes from all their available forms, including sorbent socks, pads, booms and granules.

Seasonal Floor Maintenance

Floor mats, **wet-floor signs** and **sorbents** can do much to protect your floors from becoming slip magnets. The next step involves seasonal floor maintenance, which includes four main phases:

1. **Stripping:** remove any prior coatings of wax and finish and get down to the bare floor.

2. **Sealing:** fill up the pores or holes in your current flooring.

3. **Waxing:** protect your floors and make them shine.

4. **Finishing and Buffing:** help the wax settle and reduce scratches and the buildup of dirt and dust.

Winter Preparation — Outside

Unless your facilities are shaded by palm trees, you've experienced the unique challenges the winter months can bring. When the nights get frosty, your role as a facility manager is to melt the ice on all foot-traffic surfaces before anyone slips and/or falls.

This is certainly not a game, but there are two opposing sides that are in a battle of wills. It's your maintenance team against nature.

Winning this contest means preventing all falls from ever occurring. However, if even a single person slips on the ice, you lose — and so does the person who fell and may have retained a personal injury attorney.

To ensure a victory over the ice, start by studying the available ice-melting products and choosing the ones that best fit your facility's needs.

The Most Common Commercial Ice-Melting Products:

Shop Ice Melt

Sodium chloride (rock salt):

- Usually the cheaper option.
- Not safe for pets.
- Not recommended for parking garages.
- Most effective at 20 degrees (F) or higher.

Calcium chloride/magnesium chloride:

- Combines with moisture to create heat.
- Safe for pets.
- Most effective at -15 to -25 degrees (F).
- Leaves a white chalky residue on walkways that can be tracked into buildings.

Liquid brine (water and sodium chloride):

- Used for pretreatment on roads up to three days before a winter weather event.
- Doesn't work during freezing rain or when pavement temperatures drop below 20 degrees (F).
- Not plant friendly.

Non-chloride potassium:

- Intended for building entrances at the end of a winter storm.
- Effective in temperatures as low as -63 degrees (F).
- Biodegradable and animal/plant friendly.
- Helps to prevent tracking of ice-melting chemicals inside.

Winter Preparation — Inside

Melting the ice to prevent falls outside isn't the only winter challenge FMs face. Your facility can be just as slippery and treacherous inside — and the culprits are often the same products you used to melt the ice.

The Winter Prep Paradox.

The products you use to prevent slips outside are the very things that can cause slips inside.

Remember all those people who didn't slip on the ice thanks to your team? When those people walk inside your facility, the treads of their winter shoes track in wet dirt, gray snow and ample traces of ice-melting chemicals.

All these things can wreak havoc on your daily floor-maintenance plan, and the damage varies based on the ice-melting product you used.

- **When sodium chloride-based products are tracked inside**, the salty, melted snow seeps down into the microscopic crevasses on your floors. Eventually, the water evaporates, leaving behind hard salt crystals that tend to speed up abrasive damage to your floor finish.
- **When calcium chloride-based products are tracked inside**, it corrodes the floor finish. When the water evaporates, it leaves behind a fine, white powder on resilient floors.

Here's the good news: while you're still technically in a match between your team and nature, one crucial element of the game changes once people are inside the building:

You're now playing on your own turf, so to speak.

Nature may call the shots out on the sidewalks and parking lots, but the inside floors are all yours. That means you can take the steps needed to prevent slips and falls.

It will require more aggressive and frequent floor cleaning, along with a quality **floor finish** and **protective coating**, so plan ahead and stock up on extra **floor cleaning supplies** during the winter months.

And here's where the **floor mats** that you've been using all year long can help. They can prevent much of the water and debris from ever reaching your resilient floors.

Focus on the "Prep" in Winter Preparation.

Winter maintenance will require more time and more cleaning supplies than other seasons.

Plan ahead. Stock up on products. Review your cleaning processes.

How OSHA Compliance Affects Facility Management

"The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSH Act) requires employers to comply with hazard-specific safety and health standards and regulations as issued and enforced by either the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) or an OSHA-approved State Plan."

More than 50 years ago, OSHA was created by Congress, which explains the governmental tone you might notice when reading its safety standards and regulations — of which there are many.

Here's the big one to keep in mind: "Employers must provide their employees with a workplace free from recognized hazards likely to cause death or serious physical harm under Section 5(a)(1), the General Duty Clause of the Act."

The General Duty Clause is the catch-all standard. It states that employers can be cited if they do not take steps to prevent or abate any recognized hazard in the workplace.

Given that there are nearly one thousand individual OSHA standards for practically every work environment imaginable, we've taken the liberty of including the ones that FMs like you will find most valuable.

Do You Know OSHA?

There are nearly 1,000 OSHA standards.

First Aid

Shop First Aid

(Relevant OSHA Standard: 29 CFR 1910.151)

OSHA requires adequate **first aid supplies** to be readily available (within 100 feet).

However, when it comes to the specifications for first-aid kit contents, OSHA references ANSI (The American National Standards Institute) as the originator of first-aid kit specifications and minimum contents requirements, which include:

QTY	Item and Minimum Size or Volume
16	Adhesive Bandages, 1" x 3" (2.5 x 7.5 cm)
1	Adhesive Tape, 2.5 yd (2.3 m) total
10	Antibiotic Application 1/57 oz (0.5 g)
10	Antiseptic 1/57 oz (0.5 g)
1	Burn Dressing (gel soaked) 4" x 4" (10 x 10 cm)
10	Burn Treatment 1/32 oz (0.9 g)
1	Cold Pack 4" x 5" (10 x 12.5 cm)
1	CPR Breathing Barrier
2	Eye Covering w/means of attachment 2.9" sq (19 sq cm)
1	Eye/Skin Wash 1 fl oz total (29.6 ml)
1	First Aid Guide
1	Foil Blanket 52" x 84" (132 x 213 cm)
10	Hand Sanitizer 1/32 oz (0.9 g)
4	Medical Exam Gloves
1	Roller Bandage 2" x 4 yd (5 cm x 3.66 m)
1	Scissors
2	Sterile pad 3" x 3" (7.5 x 7.5 cm)
2	Trauma pad 5" x 9" (12.7 x 22.9 cm)
1	Triangular Bandage 40" x 40" x 56" (101 x 101 x 142 cm)

Note: the first aid required contents listed above are for **Class A kits**, which are designed to deal with the most common types of workplace injuries.

For more complex or high-risk environments, ANSI and OSHA recommend **Class B kits**, which specify a broader range and quantity of first-aid supplies.

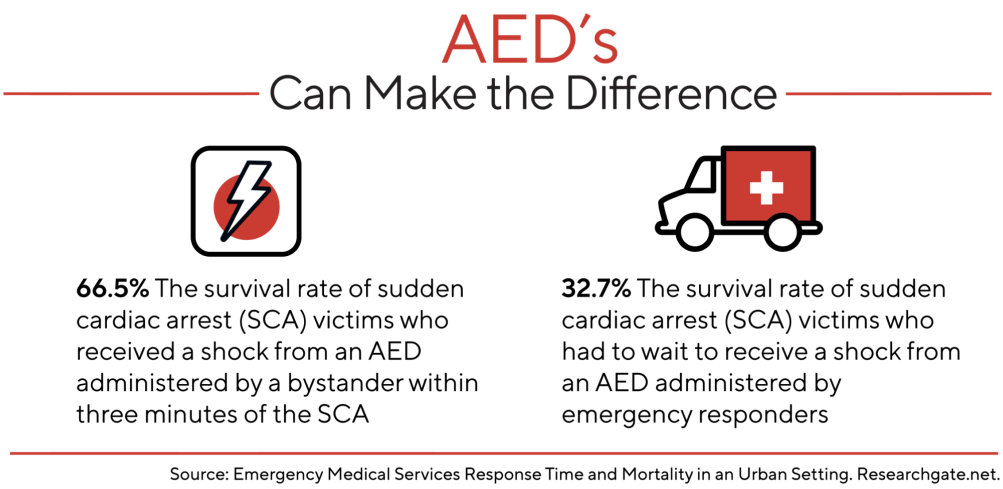
Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)

Shop AEDs

(Relevant OSHA Standard: 29 CFR 1910.151)

OSHA doesn't currently require **AEDs** to be included with first-aid supplies, but it strongly recommends doing so. That's because AEDs are now widely available, safe, effective, portable and easy to use.

AEDs provide the critical and necessary treatment for sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) caused by ventricular fibrillation, which is the uncoordinated beating of the heart. According to the American Heart Association, when an AED is used within three minutes after sudden cardiac arrest, the survival rate is 66.5%.



Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)

(Relevant OSHA Standard: 29 CFR 1910.132)

With few exceptions, OSHA requires employers to pay for PPE when it is used to comply with OSHA standards. This PPE typically includes:

- **Hard Hats**
- **Gloves**
- **Goggles**
- **Safety Glasses**
- **Face Shields**
- **Chemical Protective Equipment**
- **Masks**
- **Hearing Protection**

Respiratory Protection

Shop Face Masks & Respirators

(Relevant OSHA Standard: 29 CFR 1910.134)

Not all air is safe to breathe. The oxygen in certain environments may contain hazardous fumes, dust or other contaminants. When respiratory hazards like these are present, OSHA requires you to provide respirators, training and medical evaluations for your employees at no cost.

According to OSHA, the three most common violations of the respiratory protection standard include:

- Not providing affected employees with medical evaluations
- Not implementing a written respiratory protection program
- Not conducting or documenting respirator fit testing

Bloodborne Pathogens

(Relevant OSHA Standard: 29 CFR 1910.1030)

Bloodborne pathogens are infectious microorganisms present in blood that can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include the hepatitis B virus (HBV), the hepatitis C virus (HCV) and the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Shop Bloodborne Pathogen Spill Kit

If your facility employs workers who are regularly exposed to bloodborne pathogens as part of their job duties, these people are at risk for serious or life-threatening illnesses.

And OSHA expects a lot from you in this arena. There are currently 10 actions a company must take to become compliant with OSHA's bloodborne pathogen standard. We've included the top three of those actions that will most likely affect you, the facility manager.

- **Identify and use engineering controls -** These are devices that isolate the bloodborne pathogens hazard from your facility. They include **sharps disposal containers**, self-sheathing needles and safer medical devices, such as needleless systems.
- **Identify and ensure the use of work practice controls -** These are practices that reduce the possibility of exposure by changing the way a task is performed. They can include appropriate practices for handling and disposing of contaminated sharps, handling specimens and laundry, and cleaning contaminated surfaces and items.

Shop Medical Waste Disposal

- **Provide PPE such as gloves, gowns, eye protection and masks -** Employers must clean, repair and replace this equipment as needed. Provision, maintenance, repair and replacement are at no cost to the worker.

Eye Protection

Shop Eye Protection

(Relevant OSHA Standard: 29 CFR 1910.133)

Your facility's employees can be exposed to many hazards that pose danger to their eyes and face. OSHA requires employers to ensure that employees have appropriate eye or face protection when exposed to hazards from:

- Flying Particles
- Molten Metal
- Liquid Chemicals
- Acids or Caustic Liquids
- Chemical Gases or Vapors
- Potentially Infected Material (POIM)
- Potentially Harmful Light Radiation

Also, if the employees in your facility are regularly exposed to injurious corrosive chemicals, OSHA requires you to **install and maintain proper eyewash stations**.

Bleeding Control Kits

Shop Bleeding Control Kits

(Relevant OSHA Standard: 29 CFR 1910.151)

While OSHA has no specific requirements for bleeding control, it has historically supported the bleeding control guidelines established by the American Heart Association and the American Red Cross.

With respect to bleeding control in Standard 29 CFR 1910.151, OSHA interprets its provision in this manner:

> General industry workplaces must have the items for bleeding control listed in the ANSI standard for first-aid kit contents.

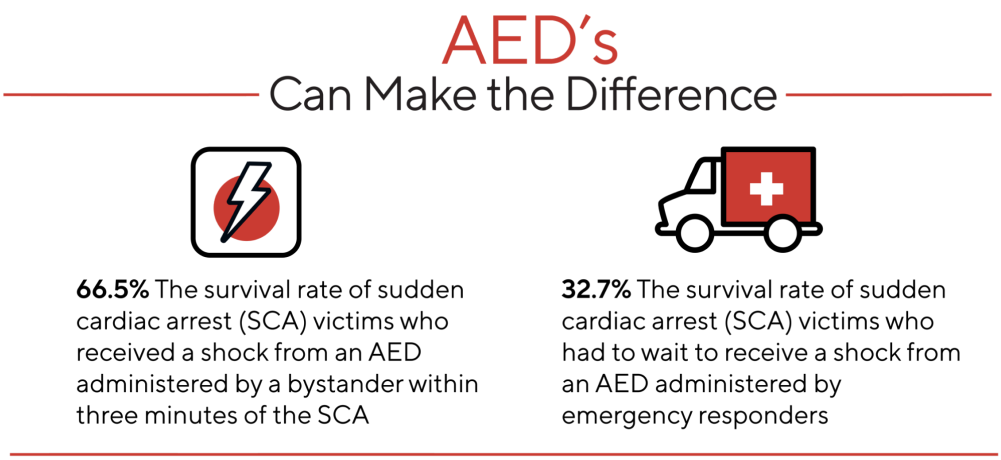
That being said, OSHA acknowledges that its standards are designed to be the minimum requirements for safety, including bleeding control. OSHA encourages companies to apply more stringent requirements at their discretion, such as bleeding control kits.

In the event of an emergency, these kits provide a bystander the right tools to stop life- threatening blood loss before professional help arrives.

Bleeding control kits come in varying sizes and can include the following life-saving tools:

- Tourniquet
- Gloves

- Hemostatic Gauze
- Compression Dressing
- Sterile Wrapping Gauze
- Trauma Sheers
- Marking Pen
- Emergency Instructions



The Big Takeaway

Physical safety is a primary pillar of facility management. It's the FM's responsibility to ensure that their facility is safe for tenants, employees and visitors.

Knowing how to do it is the challenge.

Install **floor mats** that fit your entryways to prevent water, snow, debris and ice-melting ingredients from being tracked in.

Stock up on **wet-floor signs**, and make **sorbents** part of your spill-removal processes. Seasonal floor maintenance keeps your floors resistant to the liquids and debris that most often cause people to slip.

During winter, **melt the outside ice** as quickly as possible.

While OSHA has almost 1,000 standards to address workplace safety, you now know the seven OSHA regulations that are most relevant to FMs, including the number and type of supplies in your **first-aid kits.**

Workplace injuries like slips and falls can't be completely eliminated. But when FMs prioritize safety and health throughout their facilities, they can reduce the occurrences significantly.

See more Facilities Solutions