

Risk Control Bulletin

Floor Mats - Controlling the Slip and Fall Exposures

RISK CONTROL



Floor mats play an important role in controlling slips and falls in commercial buildings such as stores, offices, schools, restaurants and other structures where the public is welcome. Controlling water contamination of hard surface walking areas is the goal of a good floor mat program.

If the floor mat is not securely fastened to the ground, and the edges flap up, a trip and fall hazard is created.

Ensure that floor mats are cleaned and/or replaced as needed.

So where does a building owner/occupant start? The Carpet and Rug Institute recommends that a minimum of 12 to 15 feet of mat coverage be provided to remove 90% of tracked in soil. The American National Standards Institute A1264.2 standard similarly requires that 80% of soil entering a building should be trapped within the first 15 feet on a carpeted surface. You should also consider the number of people using each entrance, along with the use of shopping carts and other wheeled equipment.

Finally, consider the type of weather exposure such as snow or rain. Snow requires more matting especially of the scraping kind.

The key element in developing a floor mat remedy is to determine how many footsteps on mats are needed in order to trap the contaminants. A good “rule of thumb” for running lengths of mats is:

| Weather Conditions | Number of Walking Steps | Number of Feet Based on an Average 30 Inch Pace |
|--------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Snow | 10-12 | 25 - 30 feet |
| Rain | 8-10 | 20 - 25 feet |
| Dry | 6-8 | 15 - 20 feet |

Remember, if there is excess soil, moisture, or wear beyond the end of the mat, the floor mat coverage is insufficient. Be sure to consult your matting supplier for mats specific to your building demands.