




M + A MATTING

MATTING AS THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE:
REDEFINING WORKPLACE
SAFETY STANDARDS

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A close-up photograph showing a person's legs in black pants and a wooden shoe stepping onto a dark, textured mat. The mat is placed on a wooden floor. The background is slightly blurred, showing a brick wall and a black trash can.

Slips, trips, and falls present a persistent workplace safety challenge, often resulting in severe injuries and substantial costs. While safety measures frequently focus on better floor coatings, signage, or slip-proof footwear, commercial-grade matting is one of the most effective yet underappreciated tools for mitigating these accidents. When properly positioned, high-quality matting becomes a fundamental component of a company's safety infrastructure, acting as the first defense against common slips, trips, and falls challenges.

The Current State of Workplace Safety: Slips, Trips, and Falls

According to the National Safety Council (NSC), slips, trips, and falls are the second leading cause of workplace injuries, costing approximately \$70 billion annually. These incidents harm employees and pose financial challenges for businesses through medical expenses, lost productivity, and increased insurance premiums.

Typical hazards in commercial or industrial facilities that lead to slips, trips, and falls include:



1. Wet or Slippery Surfaces:

- Spills of water, oils, grease, or other liquids
- Rainwater tracked in from outside
- Wet floors due to cleaning processes
- Icy or wet entranceways



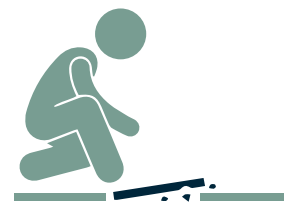
2. Weather-Related Hazards:

- Rainwater, snow, or ice on the outdoor pathways, entrances, and loading docks
- Puddles forming near entrances due to poor drainage



3. Improper Cleaning and Maintenance:

- Wet floors left unmarked by caution signs
- Using cleaning methods that leave floors slick or greasy
- Failing to clean up spills promptly

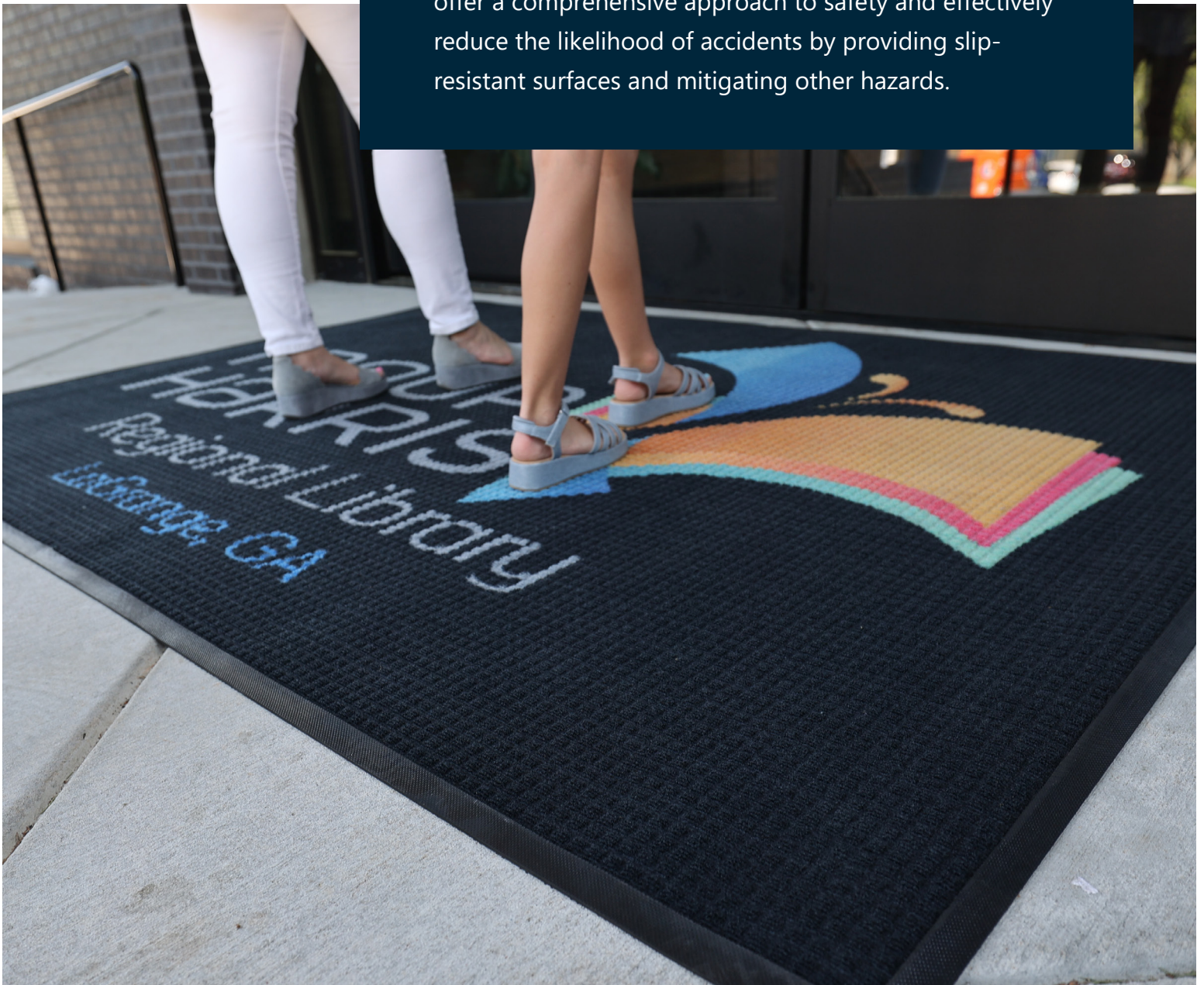


4. Flooring Issues:

- Slippery flooring materials like polished tile, marble, or wet concrete
- Lack of texture or anti-slip treatments on high-risk surfaces

The National Floor Safety Institute (NFSI) notes that many factors contribute to slips and falls, including walkway surface characteristics, footwear, and environmental factors such as contaminants. However, matting's critical role in mitigating these risks is often underemphasized.

Despite the severity of these risks, many safety protocols overlook matting as a primary preventative measure. Recommendations often prioritize footwear, caution signs, and housekeeping, leaving a gap that high-quality matting can fill. Properly selected and positioned mats offer a comprehensive approach to safety and effectively reduce the likelihood of accidents by providing slip-resistant surfaces and mitigating other hazards.





87%
of slip-and-fall claims


occur on moderate-to-low traction walkways, indicating a clear need for high-traction solutions like matting to enhance safety



Why Matting Deserves a Central Role in Safety Programs

Matting should be considered as essential to workplace safety as other equipment, from non-slip stair treads and spill kits to improved lighting and cleaning protocols. Strategically selected mats – especially placed at a facility’s entryways - provide slip resistance by absorbing moisture, trapping dirt, and enhancing traction. The ANSI/ASSP A1264.2-2022 standard underscores the importance of matting as a vital control measure in maintaining safe walking and working surfaces, particularly in areas where contaminants like water or oil are present. According to the NFSI, 87% of slip-and-fall claims occur on moderate-to-low traction walkways, indicating a clear need for high-traction solutions like matting to enhance safety.

High-quality mats can elevate the coefficient of friction (COF) of walkway surfaces, reducing the potential for slips. Additionally, matting plays a crucial role in mitigating slip and fall hazards by ensuring a smooth transition between surfaces, as outlined in the ANSI/ASSP standard. The proactive use of matting in high-risk areas like entryways, production floors, and wet zones meets safety guidelines and sets a higher workplace safety standard.



Placing high-quality commercial-grade matting at entrances and transitional areas becomes a 'silent protector' - a major deterrent to slips, trips, and falls.

*Fred Anderson, Certified Walkway Safety Specialist
and Owner of Anderson Safety Associates*



Beyond Slip and Fall Prevention: The Broader Benefits of Matting

While matting is often recognized for its role in slip prevention, its benefits extend further. Anti-fatigue mats, for example, help reduce physical stress and provide ergonomic support for employees who stand for prolonged periods. By promoting subtle movements in the leg and calf muscles, these mats increase blood flow and oxygen levels, reducing soreness and fatigue. This aligns with the ASSP standard's emphasis on addressing human factors, such as fatigue and gait, in slip prevention. Consequently, matting prevents accidents and fosters a culture of safety and care, contributing to overall worker well-being and productivity.



“High-quality commercial-grade nitrile rubber-backed mats certified ‘high traction’ by the NFSI have become the norm in our ever-changing world. When used properly, they can prevent soils and moisture from being tracked into high-risk walking/working areas and create a safer working environment.

Fred Anderson, Anderson Safety Associates”

Technological Advancements in Matting:

Nitrile Rubber

Recent advancements in matting technology have led to products offering enhanced safety, durability, and versatility. One of the most significant breakthroughs is using nitrile rubber in commercial-grade mats. Known for its exceptional durability and chemical resistance, nitrile rubber mats can withstand oils, greases, and various chemicals, making them ideal for demanding environments.

These properties make nitrile rubber a premium choice for high-performance matting solutions in environments where safety, durability, and resistance to chemicals are critical.

- 01 Durability:** Nitrile rubber is known for its exceptional strength and longevity. It can withstand heavy foot traffic and extreme temperatures, making it ideal for demanding environments.
- 02 Chemical Resistance:** Nitrile rubber is highly resistant to oils, greases, and various chemicals. This makes it particularly suitable for industrial settings where exposure to harsh substances is common.
- 03 Versatility in Thickness:** M+A Matting offers nitrile rubber in several thicknesses (52-mil, 65-mil, and 90-mil), providing different levels of support and durability based on specific needs. Select products even feature the MegaHold® backing with 100-mil nitrile rubber for added stability.
- 04 Non-Cracking and Non-Curling:** Nitrile rubber is less prone to cracking or curling than vinyl-backed mats, providing years of reliable service in both industrial and commercial applications.

Rubber Backing

The backing material is a critical yet often overlooked component of high-quality matting. Rubber backing, particularly in comparison to vinyl alternatives, is crucial in enhancing safety and effectiveness. While vinyl-backed mats may appear cost-effective initially, they often underperform in high-traffic areas and are prone to cracking and curling around the edges, potentially creating dangerous tripping hazards. In contrast, rubber-backed mats offer superior durability and safe performance, making them an ideal choice for workplace safety applications.

Smooth Backing:

A smooth rubber backing provides maximum surface contact and friction, preventing mat movement for smooth floors such as marble, tile, or wood.

Universal (Cleated) Backing:

Cleated backing, featuring small nubs that grip the carpet fibers to minimize shifting, is beneficial for carpeted surfaces. Universal backings are also suitable for smooth surfaces.

Specialized Backing:

Advanced products like MegaHold, featuring recessed suction cups, offer maximum traction on smooth surfaces in areas with exceptionally high foot traffic or heavy rolling loads.

Rubber backing comes in various types to suit different flooring surfaces and traffic conditions. The varieties of rubber backing allow businesses to choose the most appropriate mat for their specific needs, ensuring optimal safety and performance across various workplace environments. Further, rubber's ability to withstand extreme temperatures and resist cracking, curling, and warping contributes to the longevity of the mat, making it a cost-effective solution for long-term workplace safety.

Multi-Function Matting

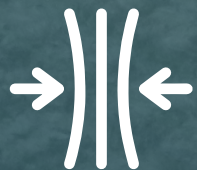
Further technological innovations have enabled forward-thinking matting providers to develop mats that combine multiple functions into a single product to address various workplace hazards. Among these products, M+A Matting's WaterHog mats stand out as scraper and wiper mats suitable for indoor and outdoor use. These mats are specifically designed to tackle critical hazards, particularly those related to wet or slippery surfaces and debris.



WaterHog® mats offer several benefits that help mitigate slips and falls:



Clean and Dry: The bi-level surface scrapes dirt and moisture from shoes, trapping it beneath the shoe level to prevent tracking. This feature prevents rainwater, snow, and ice from being tracked into the facility. The mats' water dam border can also hold up to 1.5 gallons per square yard, keeping entrance areas dry and significantly reducing slip risks.



Durable: Reinforced rubber nubs prevent surface pile crushing, extending the mat's performance life even in high-traffic areas. This durability ensures the mats maintain effectiveness over time, even in environments with heavy foot traffic or debris.



Fade and Stain Resistant: The solution-dyed PET (polyethylene terephthalate) fabric resists staining, dries quickly, and will not fade or rot, ensuring long-lasting performance. This quality makes WaterHog mats ideal for facilities where maintaining appearance and cleanliness is essential.



Safe: Beveled edges provide a smooth transition from floor to mat, minimizing tripping hazards. WaterHog mats are also certified as high-traction by the NFSI, providing enhanced traction on slippery floors like polished tile or smooth concrete.

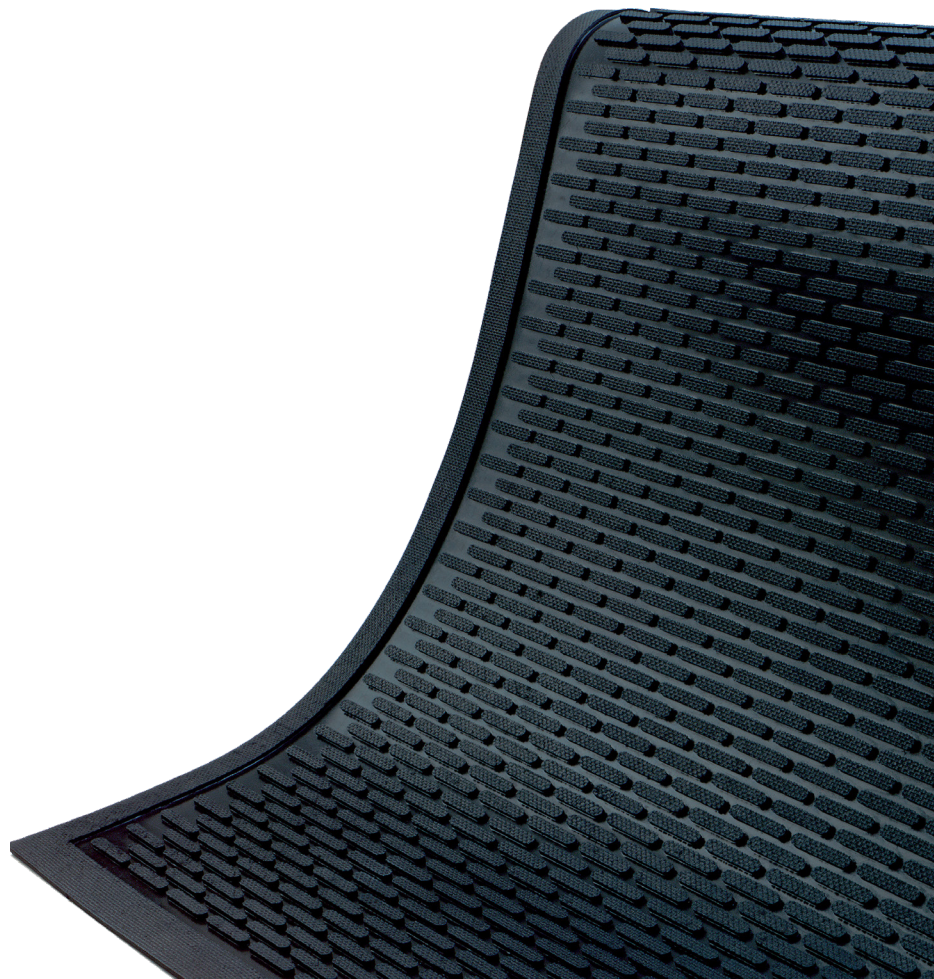


Eco-Friendly: Featuring SBR rubber backing with up to 20% post-consumer recycled rubber from car tires and a PET surface made from at least 90% recycled content reclaimed from plastic, WaterHog mats align with sustainable practices while delivering superior performance.



Adaptable to Weather-Related Hazards: While these mats do not melt snow or ice directly, they serve as a critical first line of defense at building entrances. WaterHog® mats capture melted snow and ice from footwear, keeping indoor floors dry and preventing slick conditions from developing in entryways.

In addition to the WaterHog series, M+A Matting's SuperScrape™ mats offer slip resistance, scraping action, and drainage capabilities. These mats are particularly effective when oil, grease, or chemical spills are standard. By integrating advanced products like WaterHog and SuperScrape mats into safety programs, companies can address multiple hazards simultaneously, from moisture and debris tracking to slippery flooring materials.



Proper Selection, Installation, and Maintenance of Matting

According to ANSI/ASSP A1264.2-2022, proper selection, installation, and matting maintenance are crucial to ensuring effective slip resistance. Mats should be installed to avoid creating tripping hazards, with a beveled or graduated edge to aid in the smooth transition from floor to mat. Mat size is also a consideration, with the standard recommending using a single larger mat rather than multiple smaller mats to reduce gaps and overlaps that could lead to tripping.

M+A Matting's products adhere to these standards by incorporating design features that ensure stability and safety. Their mats are equipped with slip-resistant backings that prevent sliding and buckling. Routine inspection and maintenance are crucial to identify and correct conditions such as buckling, edge curling, or dirt accumulation. M+A Matting's durable products are designed to withstand heavy use while maintaining effectiveness, aligning with the ASSP's emphasis on regular inspection and trade-out programs for mat care. Moreover, the NFSI's B101.6-2012 Entranceway Floor Mat Standard provides guidelines for choosing high-traction mats that can reduce slips and falls by up to 90%.

To maximize safety benefits, businesses should consider mats offering multiple functions in one. Products like M+A Matting's multi-functional mats provide slip resistance and enhance durability, cleanliness, and comfort, reducing the need for multiple mat types and simplifying maintenance. Proper cleaning and inspection practices ensure mats remain flat, secure, and effective in trapping dirt and moisture.



M+A Matting's durable products are designed to withstand heavy use while maintaining effectiveness, aligning with the ASSP's emphasis on regular inspection and trade-out programs for mat care.





A New Standard for Workplace Safety

Matting has long been underappreciated in workplace safety, often regarded as an optional accessory rather than a crucial safeguard. However, data and industry experience show that high-quality matting is an essential first line of defense against slips, trips, and falls. By investing in products like M+A Matting's WaterHog and SuperScrape series, companies can enhance safety protocols, reduce accidents, and create healthier work environments.

The discussion around workplace safety needs to evolve to recognize matting's critical role. By choosing and maintaining the right matting solutions, businesses can address slip hazards at their source, fostering safer, more productive environments. Matting solutions now go beyond simply mitigating slips; they contribute to a holistic approach to workplace safety, including mitigating fatigue and promoting overall worker well-being. By elevating the importance of matting in safety programs, businesses can proactively set new standards for protecting their employees, ensuring their facilities can handle various environmental and human factors effectively.



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To learn how your business can redefine safety with matting,
email products@mamatting.com.

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