

Escalator Slip and Fall Accidents in the US

Escalator accidents due to infrequent cleaning or unresolved slippery surfaces are a serious safety concern that can also open the door to legal exposure and liability.

Hazardous conditions leading to accidents places liability on property owners and property managers based on general slip and fall legal doctrines of each state.



The CDC categorizes falls into two types: Elevated and same-level falls. Same-level falls are more common and therefore cause more injuries, but elevated falls, such as those on an escalator, are more serious and usually cause more severe injuries.

There are about 35,000 escalators operating in the U.S. - far fewer than the number of elevators. But injuries occur far more frequently on escalators, about 15 times more frequently.



The 35,000 escalators operating in the US make roughly 105,000,000,000 trips per year with each one transporting an average of 12,000 people a year. According to the CDC, unintentional falls account for 19,565 deaths annually in the U.S. The Center estimates that 20% to 30% of people who experience a slip and fall will suffer moderate to severe injuries such as bruises, fractures, hip or head injuries. Slip and fall accidents are also the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries (TBI) which account for 46% of fatal falls among older Americans.

Slip and falls are mainly caused by slippery surfaces.

The walking surface of an escalators treads can accumulate a thin film of oil or grease during normal operation. This happens as the treads rotate upside down and pass directly over the operating mechanics of the escalator beneath. A thin film of oily residue is deposited on the surfaces of the treads, which creates the dangerous surface. This can then be compounded by a spilled drink, increasing the likelihood of a slip and fall accident even more dramatically. The REN cleaning pad images below show the amount of dirt and grease removed after just one 3 minute cleaning cycle on an escalator that had been serviced only one month prior.

When's the last time you cleaned your escalators?

