

Number 16-08

Safety Alert – Steps and Stairs

BACKGROUND

Since the start of 2016 there have been 2 incidents involving a fall on stairs.

In both cases the person sustained a fractured ankle resulting in pain and loss of time from work.

Across our University campuses we have many indoor and outdoor steps and stairs with many different surfaces, some carpeted, some concrete, some with non-slip edges and some that are metal.

At Callaghan and Ourimbah we spend a lot of time walking around and between buildings to reach different office, teaching, research and community spaces, which exposes us to a diverse range of environments and weather conditions, all of which raises our risk of slipping, tripping and falling.



ACTION

- ✦ If handrails are installed, use them when walking up and down steps and stairs;
- ✦ Be vigilant, look where you are going e.g. don't text on your phone till you have reached the top or bottom of the stairs then you can stop and concentrate on your phone safely;
- ✦ Be mindful as well as vigilant. We can have accidents even when we are looking where we are going if our mind is somewhere else e.g. a similar situation which can occur when you are driving and suddenly realise you can't remember the last few turns in the road. Make a conscious effort to think about where you are going as well as looking;
- ✦ Check for hazards when you are using stairs:
 - Are the non-slip edges intact and not loose or worn?
 - Are there spills on the treads e.g. water, oil?
 - Has rubbish been left on the steps or stairs?
 - If outdoors, is it wet? Are there leaves or twigs on the steps that could make them slippery?
 - Are your shoes appropriate for walking around campus and negotiating steps and stairs? For example high heels and thongs are more likely to get caught and cause a trip and fall.
- ✦ If you identify a hazard or experience a near miss involving a hazard please submit an online report <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-staff/working-here/work-health-and-safety/hazards-incidents-and-injuries/online-incident-reporting>. If the hazard also requires action to repair or maintain a physical aspect of the indoor or outdoor working environment please submit a Maximo request <https://maximo.newcastle.edu.au/maximo/webclient/login/login.jsp?appservauth=true>

DON'T BECOME A CASUALTY

STAY SAFE ON STEPS AND STAIRS

