

PROFILE



April 2009 Newsletter from the Matting Division of Plastex

e-LEARN ABOUT SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS



Every month over a 1000 people suffer serious injuries as a result of slips, trips or falls in the workplace. The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) has launched a second phase of its Shattered Lives campaign. It aims to promote action in the workplace, not least of all by making people aware of how accidents can be avoided by sensible and proportionate management of the risks. A new e-learning tool is STEP – a free and easy way to learn about slips and trips and how to prevent them. The general course is suitable for many different industries while four other courses have been specifically designed for Food Manufacturing, Hospitality & Catering, Education and the Health Services.

... and here's a gripping solution

One major solution to avoid slipping is Grip Rock - the exciting new slip resistant and hygienic matting designed particularly for those dangerous frying areas in kitchens and for preparation areas where grease, spillages and dropped food make safety underfoot vital. Launched at Domotex, it will provide safety solutions for the catering industry where slips and trips are a real problem and in 90% of cases the floor was wet or greasy, such as in frying areas. Patented Grip Rock matting is barely 3mm thick, available in 12m long x 91cm wide rolls and 1.5m x 91cm individual mats. Gripping samples are available from the Plastex sales team.

REACH OUT

REACH is an EC regulation (EC 1907/2006) on chemicals. It deals with the **R**egistration, **E**valuation, **A**uthorisation and restriction of **C**hemical substances. The aim of REACH is to improve the identification of the intrinsic properties of chemical substances. At the same time, the innovative capability of the EU chemicals industry should be enhanced. The benefits of the REACH system will come gradually, as more substances are registered.

Following the publication of Annex 1 to the above, Plastex confirm that all PVC base compounds used in the manufacture of its products do not contain Di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP) plasticizer.

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TOP TIPS

- Providing large areas of economical and attractive flooring, covering up bare areas and temporary protection are among the many applications which Fleximats can solve. The 9 different types offer a variety of surface, including raised stud, fluted and ribbed, in a large number of contemporary and stable colours.
- Lining out the floors of service vehicles or along shelves to protect equipment is easy. For example, Floorline matting is used in a fleet of Scandinavian breakdown and rescue vehicles while Vynagrip is travelling the UK in Coca-Cola service vans equipped with mobile workshops.



THE MAINTENANCE OF EMPLOYEES - comfort un



Tiredness kills, not just when driving but operating dangerous machinery or simply standing to serve a customer. Anti-fatigue precautions are just as important in a work-friendly environment, such as behind a food counter, as they are in the heavy duty environment of a factory or along a production line. Anything which can improve concentration and relieve body stress, particularly towards the end of a long day, is to be applauded.

Not so long ago, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) launched an initiative with the aim of encouraging employers to take steps to improve the health of employees. This was based on a sobering report which stated that problems caused by standing at work are just as widespread as they were in Victorian times. Sadly there has been little improvement in the last hundred years and many employers still insist their staff stand, even when there is absolutely no need. It is a fact that both constant standing and prolonged sitting can result in health problems. The preferred, healthy option is to give staff the opportunity of sitting, standing or moving around whenever appropriate.

Apart from inappropriate footwear, the problem usually stems from standing for long periods, on hard floors. This has proved to be the cause of progressive bone damage, varicose veins, poor circulation and water retention as well as back problems. As a result, the TUC is encouraging the increased option of sitting and, particularly, the wider use of high performance matting with the appropriate degree of cushioning.

INFORMATION

There is a wealth of published material about this problem. Together with the problem of slips and trips, the Health & Safety Executive is regularly putting out newsletters and reporting on case studies. As a result, the problem of standing health and comfort underfoot is receiving far wider publicity but the problem has yet to be fully resolved.

Hazards is another good source of information. This independent, union-friendly magazine includes lobbying workplace unions to encourage them both to inform employees but, particularly, to stimulate employees into taking action in order to strive for better and safer working conditions. It provides the information and resources to make the job easier, looks behind the company safety hype and gives union answers to workplace problems. Using a global network of union safety correspondents, *Hazards* claims to make sure that it provides some of the best available information. www.hazards.org is your reference.

The more responsible manufacturers too are

helping to address these problems and safety and anti-fatigue matting manufacturer Plastex is among the leaders. As long ago as 1997, the company commissioned the University of Hertfordshire to undertake research into standing fatigue and the benefits of using the right type of standing surface. One practical result is the new *Standing Fatigue Solutions* data sheet published by Plastex. This is a simple visual guide to solving the problem which, as we all know from Government statistics, affects the physical health of over 11 million people in the UK.

As Plastex's sales director Peter O'Sullivan says, 'Providing better standing comfort improves posture and well-being, makes people less tired at the end of the day and, of course, improves productivity. As a long-established matting manufacturer, we believe it is part of our remit to develop solutions which it why we researched standing fatigue. With many people employed in today's service industries, problems from standing at work have invariably become a more common occurrence, such as at cash-desks, checkouts, behind sales counters, security

derfoot

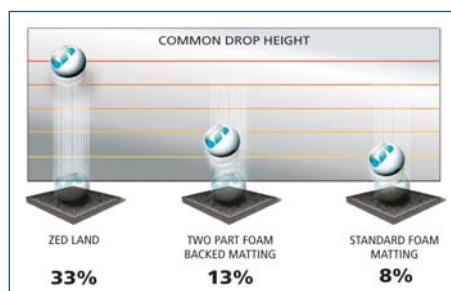
1. Zedland anti-fatigue matting in Co-op supermarket.
2. Vynagrip modules in Thames Fruit's packaging area.
3. Anti fatigue matting in action at Marley Plumbing.
4. Pillomat makes life comfortable for difficult working conditions.
5. Zed Chex in action at Lear Corporation (manufacturers of car seats).
6. Specially adapted matting for Camping de Paal childrens' wet play area.
7. Tuffspun is ideal for standing behind service counters.
8. Vynagrip at Weir Strachan.



checks, to name but a few. The results of our endeavours are anti-fatigue mats and mattings which offers variety in performance and price.'

PRODUCTS IN PRACTICE

The ideal anti-fatigue matting offers important health benefits, such as comfort underfoot, good slip resistance and thermal protection from cold floors. The resilience of the matting represents the 'bounce' it gives to anyone standing on it and this directly affects the level of standing fatigue. ASTM D 2362 measures resilience as a percentage of 'bounce' compared to the initial drop height of a standard weight ball. The illustration shows extremes – in this case the difference between a standard foam matting and Zed Land from the Plastex range. It demonstrates



significantly improved fatigue reduction properties. Interestingly, this particular matting was the subject of a recent large export order designed to relieve hard floor working conditions in a European munitions factory and depot. The matting solution was specified not only because

of its superior comfort and bounce underfoot but also because it is specially designed for standing in static sensitive environments. *Standing Fatigue Solutions* spotlights a variety of other applications where people will benefit from standing on good anti-fatigue matting and shows how various companies have solved the problem.

Marley Extrusions is a good example where the hard floor was very tiring to stand on until Zedland anti-fatigue matting was introduced. 'Our guys are very happy and find it very comfortable working on the matting – it's such a great improvement,' says engineering maintenance manager Eric Wright.

Production lines should also not be ignored. Here operatives are required both to stand still and to walk up and down so comfort and safety underfoot are essential for efficient and safe working conditions. The same applies to machinery and control equipment operatives where they need to concentrate and be fully alert at all times. Weir Strachan is one of Europe's leading metal processing companies involved with the defence and nuclear industries. Having found the solution to his problem, machine shop manager Martyn Wood says, 'Obviously we did not want our employees slipping alongside work benches. Vynagrip high performance matting proved to be the ideal solution by providing flexibility for workshop floor cleaning operations as well as increased comfort underfoot.' This matting has a deeply

etched surface which provides the safe grip required while the open grid will drain away spillages. At the same time it gives that resilience and bounce which takes away the 'pain' of standing on a hard cold floor.

Thames Fruit, distributors of citrus fruit to supermarkets, is another good example of a problem solved by using anti-fatigue modules in the packaging department. Importantly, the individual module ensures that employees are less tired and that strain on body and back is relieved. As the areas are refrigerated to prolong fruit life the matting also insulates from the cold floor which further reduces fatigue.

Serving the public is clearly one of the greatest problems. Often there is the assumption that to sit while attending to the customer is impolite. The reality is that failure by the employer to recognise the problem and provide, at the very least, fatigue reducing solutions is highly irresponsible. Examples of typical installations are shown above. ■

SALES LINE

If you have a specific matting or flooring problem to do with standing fatigue or slip-resistance, contact Plastic Extruders as more than likely we will be able to offer a solution.

Tel UK +44 (0)1268 571116 or
Tel USA +1 256 845 7725
email sales@plastexmatting.com or
visit www.plastexmatting.com

10 YEARS SERVICE

Plastex Matting Inc is 10 years old. Seen here at the Alabama factory, Plastex managing director David O'Sullivan is pleased to honour the three employees who have served the company from the very beginning.



"RJ" Pendergrass



Michael Tomas



Donna Elrod



CASE STUDY CLEANING UP THE SCHOOL

THE PROBLEM

The school entrance is the point where up to 80% of external dirt is blown in by the wind and brought in on the soles of shoes. The problem is exacerbated because of type of user, namely school children, for whom wiping shoes diligently is not a natural priority. It is therefore of prime importance to take the most stringent precautions and specify entrance barrier protection of the highest quality and which gives the best performance in practice.

THE SOLUTION

St Andrews CE Primary School is a new building which replaces a school on the same site at Steyning in West Sussex. In order to minimise disruption to the school, temporary teaching accommodation was set up. Obviously, it was necessary to keep this clean so modules of matting from the Fronrunner Entrance Matting System were laid outside and inside the entrances. These proved so successful at maintaining high standards of cleanliness that the local authority architects were persuaded to change their original specification and to use the same matting for entrances to the new school. Outside each entrance, 100% pvc open grid Fronrunner is laid as the primary cleaning barrier. It contours well over the substrate and remains stable. This is complemented internally by a second barrier of Fronrunner Plus.

THE RESULT

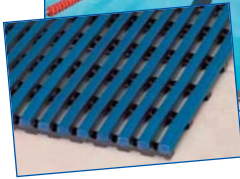
'As you can imagine,' says headteacher Chris Luckin, '420 pupils have the propensity of transferring a large amount of shoe dirt into the school. Cleaning costs money so we were anxious that the very best precautions would be taken. We were fortunate that trials with the temporary accommodation led us to find the right solution.'

The Fronrunner Flooring system solution has not only prevented the ingress of dirt on the shoes of hundreds of pupils but also dramatically improved the everyday appearance of the entrances and the school reception areas. At the same time, maintenance costs have been reduced.

Visit www.fronrunnerplus.com for entrance matting solutions.

NORTH AMERICAN PROJECTS

Over the years, the US sales team has notched up many successes. One of the latest is the Health Club, part of the world famous Chelsea Piers Sports and Entertainment Center, a complex which attracts over 4 million visitors each year and occupies a 28 acre in Manhattan on the Hudson River. Here 300 feet of slip resistant Heronrib has been laid in the pool areas.



....and up in Canada

The Clorox factory in Ontario has recently installed Vynagrip matting in the production areas. Operating 24 hours a day, the plant has 150 employees and manufactures plastic Glad Bags, the well-known brand for domestic refuse. This heavy duty slip resistant matting has provided Clorox with the ideal solution for covering the hard and very smooth concrete floor and thereby

providing increased safety and reduced fatigue underfoot. To define the precise working areas, the matting is fitted with safety alert yellow PVC edges.

HUMOUR!

INTERESTING YEAR 1981

1. Prince Charles got married
2. Liverpool crowned soccer Champions of Europe
3. Australia lost the Ashes tournament.
4. Pope Died

INTERESTING YEAR 2005

1. Prince Charles got married
2. Liverpool crowned soccer Champions of Europe
3. Australia lost the Ashes tournament.
4. Pope Died

LESSON LEARNED

The next time Charles intends getting married ... someone should warn the Pope and the Aussie cricketers.



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