

Pay attention to pool slip prevention!

Recognize pool deck slip and fall hazards.

A passenger ship company was declared negligent for a poolside slip and fall accident involving a passenger. While on-board, an elderly woman slipped and fell on the cruise ship's pool deck area. It is of course expected that pool decks have some risk of slippage. However, investigators of this incident determined that the particular resin coating used on the pool's deck had created an unusually slippery condition.

It was also thereafter discovered that several prior accidents had already been reported to the company stemming from the resin coating used on other ships in the company's fleet, and that no actions had been taken to prevent any further accidents. After the fall, the injured passenger was seen by the ship's doctor and she was reportedly told that she did not need any immediate treatment for the knee. She thereafter received medical treatment on shore and had to undergo several knee surgeries due to the severity of her injuries. The injured passenger was awarded \$3 million due to this injury.

Actual Injuries: This passenger's accident resulted in serious injuries including fractured patella, complete knee replacement, fusing of the knee requiring multiple knee surgeries. The injured passenger was required to wear a brace spanning the entire length of her leg, to help her walk.

Cause: Many of the decks of the modern cruise ships have resin flooring which is less prone to cracking and separating when the steel deck underneath expands or contracts and also enhances the appearance of the pool. However, a small amount of water can make this resin material slick and dangerous, and can cause slip and falls.

Recommendations

- Consideration should be given to the risks of slips, trips and falls including potentially slippery surfaces and the wear and tear of surfaces around pools and spas.
- The company should consider performing periodic slip tests on the deck material.
- Evaluate and consider the use of appropriate slip and skid resistant products.
- There should be regular and adequate inspection and maintenance of surfaces surrounding pools and spas. Passenger safety should be included in the company's SMS manual and actions to take to ensure decks are inspected.
- Recommend using a system or testing device to measure the coefficient of friction.
- The company should consider establishing policies for pool and spa slips, trips and falls prevention, incident investigation, and reporting.
- Utilize caution signs such as "SLIPPERY WHEN WET" and "DO NOT RUN".



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