

Slip and Fall Claims in New Jersey Shopping Centers

Friday, August 14th, 2026

Shopping centers are designed to be convenient places where people can shop, dine, and run errands. However, hazards such as wet floors, uneven walkways, poor lighting, and unattended spills can quickly turn an ordinary trip into a painful and costly accident. If you were injured in a slip and fall accident at a New Jersey shopping center, you may have questions about your legal rights and whether the property owner can be held responsible. Understanding how these claims work can help you protect your health, preserve important evidence, and make informed decisions about your next steps. This article explains common causes of shopping center slip and fall accidents, who may be liable, and what injured visitors should know about pursuing a claim.

Common Causes of Slip and Fall Accidents in Shopping Centers

[Slip and fall accidents](#) can happen almost anywhere within a shopping center, including retail stores, restaurants, parking lots, sidewalks, and common areas. Some of the most common hazards include:

- Wet or recently mopped floors
- Spilled food or beverages
- Snow, ice, or rainwater tracked indoors
- Uneven pavement or sidewalks
- Cracked walkways
- Loose floor mats or carpeting
- Poor lighting in hallways or parking lots
- Missing handrails
- Debris left in walkways

While not every fall results in legal liability, property owners and businesses generally have a responsibility to maintain reasonably safe conditions for visitors. When dangerous conditions are ignored or not addressed within a reasonable time, an injured person may have grounds for a claim.

Who May Be Responsible for a Shopping Center Fall?

Determining liability is often one of the most important aspects of a slip and fall claim. Depending on the circumstances, responsibility may rest with:

- The owner of the shopping center
- A property management company
- An individual store tenant
- A maintenance contractor
- Another party responsible for maintaining the [premises](#)

For example, if a customer slips on a spill inside a retail store, the store operator may be responsible. If the accident occurs in a common area such as a parking lot or sidewalk, responsibility may fall on the shopping center owner or management company. An investigation is often necessary to determine

who controlled the area where the accident occurred and whether they failed to address a known or reasonably discoverable hazard.

What Must Be Proven in a New Jersey Slip and Fall Claim?

To recover compensation in a slip and fall case, an injured person generally must establish that:

A Dangerous Condition Existed

There must have been a hazardous condition that created an unreasonable risk of harm. Examples include:

- A puddle left unattended
- Broken pavement
- Accumulated ice
- Defective flooring

The Responsible Party Knew or Should Have Known About the Hazard

In many cases, the injured person must show that the property owner or occupier either:

- Had actual knowledge of the dangerous condition; or
- Should have discovered it through reasonable inspections and maintenance.

The Hazard Caused the Injury

The injured person must also demonstrate that the dangerous condition directly caused the accident and resulting injuries.

Damages Were Suffered

Compensation may be available for losses resulting from the accident, including medical expenses, lost income, and other damages related to the injury.

Injuries Commonly Seen in Shopping Center Falls

Slip and fall accidents can cause far more than minor bruises. Common injuries include:

- Fractures and broken bones
- Head injuries and concussions
- Back and spinal injuries
- Shoulder injuries
- Hip fractures
- Knee injuries
- Soft tissue damage
- Chronic pain conditions

Older adults may be particularly vulnerable to serious injuries such as hip fractures, which can require extensive treatment and rehabilitation. Even injuries that seem minor initially can become more serious over time, making prompt medical evaluation important after any fall.

What Should You Do After a Slip and Fall Accident?

The actions taken immediately after a slip and fall can significantly affect both your health and a potential legal claim.

Seek Medical Attention

Your health should always be the top priority. Prompt medical treatment can also help document the connection between the accident and your injuries.

Report the Incident

Notify store management, shopping center security, or the property owner as soon as possible and request that an incident report be completed.

Document the Scene

If possible, take photographs of:

- The hazardous condition
- Your injuries
- Warning signs (or lack of warning signs)
- The surrounding area

Gather Witness Information

Witnesses can provide valuable information regarding how the accident occurred and the condition of the property.

Preserve Evidence

Keep copies of:

- Medical records
- Medical bills
- Receipts
- Lost wage documentation
- Correspondence related to the accident

Challenges in Slip and Fall Cases

Many shopping centers maintain surveillance systems, but video footage may not be preserved indefinitely. Property owners and insurance companies may also argue that:

- The hazard did not exist long enough for them to address it
- The condition was obvious
- The injured person was partially responsible for the fall
- The injuries were unrelated to the accident

Because evidence can disappear quickly, it is often important to investigate the circumstances of the accident as soon as possible.

Frequently Asked Questions

How long do I have to file a slip and fall claim in New Jersey?

The time limit for filing a claim depends on the specific circumstances of the case. Because deadlines can vary and missing a deadline can impact your rights, it is important to speak with an attorney promptly after an accident.

Can I recover compensation if I was partially at fault?

Potentially. Liability issues can be complex, and the facts of each case matter. An attorney can evaluate how comparative fault principles may apply to your situation.

What compensation may be available?

Depending on the circumstances, compensation may include medical expenses, lost earnings, pain and suffering, rehabilitation costs, and other damages related to the injury.

Injured in a Slip and Fall at a New Jersey Shopping Center?

A fall in a shopping center can leave you facing medical bills, lost income, and uncertainty about what comes next. If you were injured because of a dangerous condition on someone else's property, you do not have to navigate the legal process alone. The attorneys at Wilentz, Goldman & Spitzer, P.A. [Personal Injury Team](#) can evaluate your situation, explain your legal options, and help you understand whether you may have a viable claim. Contact us today to discuss your case and learn more about your rights following a shopping center slip and fall accident.

Attorney

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