

SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS: ON THE JOB SAFETY BASICS

"Don't Fall For It"



We don't always take falls seriously. But falls are accidents, which often cause injury and lost time. Falls can even be fatal. Next to traffic accidents falls kill more people than any other kind of accident. Occupational falls cause more than 1500 deaths per year, along with approximately 300,000 injuries. Injuries from falls may include cuts, bruises, muscle sprains and strains, back injuries and broken bones.

What Happens When You Slip and Trip?

Loss of traction is the leading cause of workplace slips. Constantly wet surfaces, spills or weather hazards like ice and snow can cause slips. A trip can happen when your work area is cluttered, when lighting is poor, or when an area has loose footing. Slips and trips are more likely to occur when you hurry or run, wear the wrong kind of shoes or don't pay attention to where you're walking.

What Happens When You Fall?

Falls occur whenever you move too far off your center balance. They are also caused by makeshift ladders, misuse of ladders, accidents while climbing and improper use of scaffolding. Most falls are slips or trips at ground level, but falls from greater heights pose a much higher risk of serious injury.

Stairs Can Be Dangerous

A high-risk area for the average worker is stairs. Loss of traction causes the highest number of stairway slipping and falling accidents and is usually due to liquid and other fluids on the steps. Because we use stairs so often, it's easy to get careless and forget that they can be hazardous.

Wearing The Right Shoes Helps

One of the best ways to help prevent slip, trip and fall injuries are to increase friction between your shoes and the surface you walk on. The amount of traction a sole provides varies with the work surface. When selecting safety shoes, you have to determine what conditions and/or hazards you face most often on the job. Non-slip shoes and soles will also be helpful when climbing ladders and scaffolds. Be sure your footwear matches the working conditions present on your job.

You can protect yourself from injury. Remember these safety rules to avoid slipping, tripping and falling:

- Move slowly and pay attention to the surface you're walking on.
- Clean up spills right away.
- Don't let grease accumulate on a shop floor around machinery.
- Be more cautious on smooth surfaces.
- Make sure you can see where you are going. Don't carry a load that you can't see over.
- Keep work areas well lit.
- Keep your work area clean and don't clutter aisles or stairs.
- Arrange furniture so that it doesn't interfere with walkways or pedestrian traffic in your area.
- Extension or power tool cords can be dangerous tripping hazards. Tape them to the floor or arrange them so that they won't be in the way.
- Eliminate hazards due to loose footing on stairs, steps and floors. Report any unsafe conditions promptly including loose carpeting, stair treads or handrails. Broken pavement, floor boards or loose floor tiles can also cause a fall.
- Use handrails whenever possible.
- Don't run up and down stairs or jump from landing to landing.
- Don't jump. Lower yourself carefully from docks, trucks or work stages.
- Wear good shoes.



Preventing slips, trips and falls is a task that depends on many factors. One of the most important is you. You might not be able to change many aspects of your work place. However, you can recognize the dangers, work to eliminate the hazards and use safety devices and equipment. Falls aren't funny, preventing them is serious business

