

Preventing Slips, Trips & Falls

Each year many people are disabled from falling accidents. Slips, trips and falls often result in serious injuries including strains, sprains, broken bones and fractures.

Slips occur when there is not enough friction between your feet and the surface on which you work or walk. Wet surfaces, occasional spills, weather hazards such as snow or ice, and wearing shoes without appropriate traction are all causes of slips.

Trips are caused when your forward motion is interrupted by some object, although you can also trip when you are walking or running backwards. Common causes of trips include taking short cuts, leaving clutter in walkways, working under poor lighting, and walking on loose, uneven flooring.

Falls occur when you move too far off your center of balance. Using makeshift ladders, reaching too far up or to the side while on a ladder, or placing ladders on uneven ground can cause falls. Slips and trips can also end in falls.

If you're in a hurry or thinking about something else and you don't look where you're going or at what's around you, you may end up on the floor.

Your best protection against hazards is to be alert! Look where you're going; check the condition of floors, stairs, ladders and the work area.

Slippery floors are always dangerous. Be especially careful if they're waxed or polished, icy or wet. Other possible problems: oil, grease or chemical spills, or floors made of tile, marble, or other slippery surfaces.



General Hazards

There are a number of common causes of slips, trips and falls. Among the most common are:

- Slippery or uneven surfaces
- Improper shoes
- Moving too fast
- Obstructions in walkways or on stairs
- Unsafe stairs
- Poor lighting
- Being tired or distracted
- Not paying attention!

Employee Guidelines

Proper guidelines will help employees stay on the lookout for hazards that cause slips, trips and falls. The following guidelines should help:

- If you drop it, pick it up.
- If you spill it, wipe it up.
- Go where you're looking and look where you're going.
- Check that aisles are clear.
- Be sure that floors are clean.

None of these safety procedures are very complicated—it shouldn't take very long before they become habits.

Employee Responsibilities

Most accidents can be prevented when you remember to:

- Look where you're going.
- Look for known hazards.
- Maintain your work area to reduce the risks of falls.

As an employee, you should be responsible for:

- Maintaining good housekeeping practices.
- Immediately reporting liquid spills, loose or warped floor boards, broken tiles, burned-out bulbs, etc.
- Being aware of the choices you make.

It is important to pay attention to how jobs are performed—and even to basic movements like walking. Every employee should give his or her full physical and mental attention to the job at hand—working safely requires complete concentration!

Slips, trips and falls are especially common and troublesome because they can occur at any time during any activity. Most slips, trips and falls can be prevented—and that should be a high priority for everyone.

Safety Procedures

The key to avoiding slips, trips and falls is learning to identify the hazards that might cause them and following these simple safety procedures.

- Pay attention to what you're doing, where you're going and what might be in your way.
- Be on the lookout for foreign substances on the floor, such as water, food or grease.
- Step over or around obstructions, not on them.
- Clean up spills and leaks right away.
- Wear shoes with non-skid soles and flat heels.
- Walk slowly, sliding your feet, on surfaces that are wet, slippery or uneven.
- Report any hazard. Make it your responsibility; don't depend on someone else to do it.
- Keep walkways and aisles clear.
- Walk, don't run. Change directions slowly.
- Make sure lighting is adequate.



SafetyConnection: Preventing Slips, Trips & Falls

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