



A Guide to Preventing Slip, Trip, & Fall Injuries

Slip, Trip, Fall Facts:

- » Cause 15% of all accidental deaths
- » Account for approximately 8.9 million emergency department visits
- » Result in painful injuries and lost time from work

Slips, trips, and falls are among the most common accidents that occur in the workplace. According to OSHA, "Slips, trips and falls constitute the majority of general industry accidents. They cause 15% of all accidental deaths, and are second only to motor vehicles as a cause of fatalities." The National Safety Council reports, "Falls are one of the leading causes of unintentional injuries in the United States, accounting for approximately 8.9 visits to the emergency department (2011 NSC Injury Facts)." In addition to painful and debilitating injuries, expensive medical bills and loss of wages due to lost work time can also result from a slip, trip and fall incident.

The good news is that these injuries can be prevented by understanding what causes a slip, trip and fall and knowing how to safely avoid related risk exposures.

Hazards That Can Contribute To Slip, Trip, Fall Accidents

Weather

- » Ice
- » Snow
- » Rain

Illumination

- » Poorly lit
- » Glare
- » Night

Walking surfaces

- » Uneven
- » Unfamiliar
- » Slippery or wet

False sense of urgency

- » Unsafe speed
- » Taking short cuts
- » Unfocused

Elevated walkways

- » Stairs
- » Ladders
- » Catwalks
- » Scaffolds

Specific tasks

- » Carrying or transferring loads
- » Working near a water source
- » Entering or exiting a vehicle
- » Improper footwear

Location of Slip, Trip, Fall Accidents

General Building Areas:

- » Office and store rooms
- » Food service and cafeteria
- » Engineering, custodial, and boiler room
- » Entrances, parking lots, and sidewalks
- » Stairs and hallways
- » Shops—auto, woodwork, metal
- » Entering and exiting elevators
- » Loading docks



Prevention

Wear proper footwear:

- » As recommended by department
- » Slip resistant soles over shoes
- » Keep shoes clean—free of mud, oil, grease and ice

Adjust gait for walking surface:

- » Keep one hand free for balance
- » Always maintain a safe speed and never run
- » Point your feet out

Observe the area first and use caution if you note the following:

- » Poor housekeeping
- » Storage in aisles or on stairs

Other safety measures:

- » Ensure proper illumination—slow down when light is limited
- » Use appropriate surface coating, mats, throw rugs, runners or stair treads
- » Proper placement of electrical cords and hoses
- » Practice smart storage, layout or design of equipment and furniture
- » Be sure exits are marked clearly and are visible

Basic Safety Guidelines

- Take short steps and slow down.
- Make wide turns at corners.
- Clean up or mark spills immediately.
- Take the pathway provided and be sure it is clear.
- Make sure you can see over the load you are carrying.
- Turn on lights, replace bulbs, repair fixtures.
- Keep areas clean and clear of clutter.
- Fix loose carpeting on stair treads.
- Fasten throw rugs, mats, and runners, or use slip-resistant materials.
- Use appropriate climbing equipment.
- Follow the 4:1 rule when using a ladder.
- Have someone support the base of the ladder when possible.
- Always close file cabinets and drawers.
- Keep all chair legs on the floor at all times.
- Always use handrails on stairways, steps, and entrances.