

AVOIDING SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS

Slips, trips and falls cause the majority of general industry accidents, and a number of accidental deaths – more fatalities than all other accident causes but motor vehicles.

You can fall when walking, standing, or even sitting in a chair, but most occur while walking. Causes may include oil or water spilled on a floor, losing your footing on stairs or a gravel path, a slippery parking lot or a wet floor, or tripping over a loose wire.

Paying attention to the conditions around you and looking before you walk can help you prevent painful and disabling slips and falls.

- Is the floor clean and level? Is it dry?
- If you are carrying something, can you see where you are going?
- Is carpeting torn, bulging or bunched?
- Do area rugs or mats have non-slip backings?
- Are highly-polished floors slippery?
- Are there any “wet floor” warning signs?
- Are aisles and passageways clear?
- Do stairs have hand railings?
- Are ladders used safely?
- Is snow, ice or rainwater removed promptly?
- Is lighting adequate in all work areas, halls and stairways?
- Do employees wear appropriate footwear?



The Floor Surface

These walking surfaces can be hazardous, especially if you are not careful:

- Rough ground
- Oily or painted concrete
- Smooth wet floors
- Gravel
- Carpets and rugs

Take special care to maintain and clean these surfaces properly.



Basic and Recommended Practices

Complying with certain basic OSHA standards (for “Walking and Working Surfaces”) will go a long way toward preventing injuries from slips, trips and falls:

- Keep all places of employment clean and orderly and in a sanitary condition.
- Keep floors clean and dry.
- Keep aisles and passageways clear and in good repair with no obstruction across, or in, aisles that could create a hazard.
- Provide floor plugs for equipment, so power cords need not run across pathways.
- Provide warning signs for wet floor areas.
- Keep exits free from obstruction. Access to exits must remain clear of obstructions at all times.

Implement recommended safe work practices:

- Provide adequate lighting.
- Repair any uneven floor surfaces.
- Relay or stretch carpets that bulge or have become bunched to prevent tripping hazards.
- Use non-skid waxes and surfaces coated with grit to create non-slip surfaces.
- Use non-slip mats.
- Promote a proper footwear program that provides for appropriate work shoes for employees. (These programs require workers or employers to purchase non-slip footwear for work use.)
- Make aisles and passageways sufficiently wide for easy movement and keep aisles clear at all times.