



Slips, Trips & Falls

Occupational Safety and Health Administration research shows slips, trips and falls are responsible for the majority of general industry accidents. They also are the cause of 15 percent of all accidental deaths.

Employers must be aware of workplace hazards that expose workers to potential slips and trips, including:

- Hidden steps
- Smooth surfaces
- Wet, icy or oily surfaces
- Loose flooring, carpets or rugs

Train employees to avoid accidental trips by keeping their work areas neat and orderly. While working, employees should be aware of:

- Items on floors
- Furniture in high-traffic areas
- Drawers left open
- Objects left on stairways
- Electrical cords in open areas

OSHA standards for walking/working surfaces are applicable to all permanent places of employment except where only domestic, mining or agricultural work is performed. Specific OSHA standards apply to general industry, shipyards, marine terminals, longshore work and the construction industry. For more information, visit OSHA's Safety and Health Topics Web page on Walking/Working Surfaces.

Tragic, Costly Falls

- Researchers estimate nearly 6,000 people die annually as a result of falls. Nonfatal worker injuries most often are linked to slips and trips at FLOOR LEVEL.

To Prevent Falls at the Work Site:

- Ensure lighting is sufficient in the area.
- Avoid using makeshift stepstools, like boxes (use a stepladder instead).
- Repair or replace worn stair treads or torn, unraveled carpet.
- Lower yourself gently from high areas such as flatbeds or work stages; never jump.
- Check the length of your pant and skirt hems and cuffs so they aren't caught while walking or working near moving parts of machinery.

Know How to Safely Use a Ladder:

- Ensure the ladder is in good condition and has safety feet.
- Always face the ladder.
- Use the 4-to-1 Rule: for each 4 feet of height, set the base out 1 foot.
- Don't carry anything in your hands while climbing the ladder. Instead, hoist what you need.
- Move the ladder if an item is out of your reach.
- Keep your body centered so that your belt buckle is between side rails.

Source: Occupational Safety & Health Administration

Safety tips developed based on generally accepted safety standards believed to be reliable at the date of publication. Information is for general guidance only and should not be relied upon for legal compliance purposes.

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