



Slips, Trips and Falls

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One way to help keep employees safe is through following slip, trip and fall standards set forth by OSHA. The following, geared toward general industry and construction but useful for every workplace, should always be followed:

- All areas of employment should be kept clean and sanitary.
- The floors should be kept clean and dry and where wet processes are used, they should be kept as dry as possible.
- Aisles and passageways should be kept clear and in good repair.
- Permanent aisles and passageways should be marked.
- The floor of every workroom should remain as dry as possible.
- If wet processes are used, proper drainage and dry standing places (mats, platforms) should be provided.
- Every stairway floor opening should be guarded by a standard railing.
- Every ladder floor opening or platform should be guarded with a standard toe board on all exposed sides.
- Any floor hole that could be walked into must have a standard railing or toeboard surrounding it.
- For infrequently used floor holes, such as trapdoors, a cover that is of standard strength and construction should be used; when the cover is not in place, the opening should be constantly attended by someone or protected by removable standard railings.

Housekeeping

Good housekeeping is the first and the most fundamental level of fall prevention. Without good housekeeping practices, any other preventive measures won't be fully effective. Therefore, be sure to:

- Clean all spills immediately.
- Mark spills and wet areas.
- Mop or sweep debris from floors.
- Remove obstacles from walkways and always keep them free of clutter.
- Secure mats, rugs and carpets that don't lay flat.
- Always close file cabinets or storage drawers.
- Cover cables that cross walkways.
- Keep working areas and walkways well-lit.
- Replace used light bulbs and faulty switches.

Floor Surfaces and Coverings

Changing or modifying walking surfaces is the next level of preventing slip and trips. Recoating or replacing floors, installing mats, pressure-sensitive abrasive strips or abrasive-filled paint-on coating and metal or synthetic decking can further improve safety and reduce risk of falling.

However, it's critical to remember that high-tech flooring requires good housekeeping as much as any other flooring. In addition, resilient, non-slippery flooring prevents or reduces foot fatigue and contributes to slip-prevention measures.

Floor finishes and waxes should be selected for slip-resistant qualities. A well-maintained carpet provides good protection against slips and falls. Defective floor surfaces should be immediately repaired. Worn or warped mats under office chairs should be replaced. Slip-resistant protection should be used on stairways and at lobby or elevator entrances.

Aisles and Stairs

Aisles and stairs throughout the work area should be kept clear. Storage of material in aisles and stairs should be prohibited. All stairs four or more steps high are required to have secure railings on both sides.

Slips

Slip accidents often occur due to:

- Loss of balance caused by too little friction
- Loss of traction
- Walking on wet surfaces
- Change in floor surfaces (thresholds)
- Spills
- Weather hazards
- Loose or unanchored rugs or mats

Preventing Slips

- Slow down and shorten your stride.
- Use designated marked walkways.
- Point your toes out slightly and make wide turns.
- Wear shoes that provide added traction.
- Clean up spills or leaks as soon as you notice them, especially around entrances and exits.
- Designate safe storage areas for chemicals, tools and equipment, and keep potentially hazardous items in storage when not in use.
- Be cautious on smooth surfaces.

Trips

Tripping accidents often occur due to:

- Cluttered work areas
- Poor lighting
- Change in floor surfaces or uneven walking surfaces
- Moving too quickly
- Wrinkled carpeting
- Uncovered cables
- Drawers or cabinets not being closed

Preventing Trips

- Take extra care when walking from carpeted to smooth, hard surfaces.
- Take your time and watch where you are going.
- Never leave file cabinet drawers open.
- Secure loose carpeting and cut loose threads.
- Never run power cords under carpet.
- Ensure you can see over the load you are carrying.
- Ensure adequate lighting.
- Keep work areas free of clutter.
- Keep furniture out of walkways and other high-traffic areas.
- Tape down extension cords and keep them out of walkways.
- Properly store ramps and gangplanks in loading dock areas.



Falls

Fall accidents often occur due to:

- Persons losing their center of balance
- Misuse of ladders or using makeshift ladders
- Improper scaffolding use
- Foreign objects on walkways
- Slippery walking surfaces
- Moving too fast for the surface
- Improper footwear for the walking surface



Preventing Falls

- Ensure adequate lighting.
- Repair loose or broken stairs and handrails.
- Don't use stairs or aisle ways as storage areas.
- Always report unsafe conditions, including broken stair treads, floor boards and handrails.
- Remove from service ladders with broken rungs or steps.

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