

Slips, Trips and Falls

Falls from heights cause the most injuries, and they are usually the most severe. However, lost time injuries can also happen when workers fall or slip on the same level. For example, a worker might fall after tripping on some garbage, over an extension cord or slipping on a muddy plank or icy walkway.

Slips, trips and falls to the same level are a major source of workplace injuries such as sprains, strains, bruises, fractures, lacerations and internal organ damage. These injuries may require first aid and often lead to lost-time injuries which may require long term healing and care.

Slip, Trip and Fall Hazards on the Worksite:

- Slippery, wet, oily, and greasy surfaces.
- Seasonal conditions (rain, snow or ice).
- Spills of wet or dry substances.
- Uneven surfaces (curbs, ruts from equipment, elevation changes). This is extenuated if a worker is carrying something.
- Poor lighting, smoke, steam or dust obscure the view.
- Walkways used for storage of materials.
- Cord and cables in the path of travel.

What Can an Employer Do?

Plan

- Keep the site clean through continuous housekeeping, or schedule it for a specific time.
- Designate specific areas for laydown and storage
- Have disposal bins placed around the jobsite to make it easier for garbage disposal and recycling.

Perform

- Perform ongoing hazard assessments, workplace inspections, and site maintenance and repairs

- Remove debris as often as required to keep work and travel areas clear, including walkways, entrances and exits
- Keep equipment and areas surrounding clear
- Pick-up, store or dispose of tools, materials or debris
- Raise the main walking paths and add material to build up a proper walkway, where required.
- Fill low-lying areas with gravel to reduce the accumulation of water, ice, and mud.
- During the winter, keep walkways, access areas, and stairs clear of snow and ice. Use salt or sand in those areas and make sure boots provide good traction.

Communicate

- In your jobsite orientation, describe the housekeeping responsibilities for all workplace parties.
- Give regular safety talks on housekeeping .
- Ask equipment operators to steer clear of soft ground and avoid walkways to prevent uneven walking surfaces.
- Post warning signs in areas where hazards cannot be eliminated.

What Can Workers Do?

- Before starting work, look around your work area and become familiar with your surroundings. Pay attention to your footing when carrying things.
- Keep the work area clear. Clean up or fix tripping hazards or inform your supervisor.
- Walk, don't run.
- Clean up after yourself.
- Cover or hang any cords. Unplug when not in use.
- Stack materials neatly in a designated area and secure them so that they can't fall into pathways or work areas.