

# **Company Name**

## **SAFE WORK PRACTICE**

### **SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS**

#### **SPECIAL EQUIPMENT REQUIRED**

As noted in practices below.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In Canada some sixty thousand workers get injured annually due to fall accidents. This number represents about fifteen percent of the "time-loss injuries" that were accepted by workers' compensation boards or commissions across Canada. Not mentioning a great economical loss, it amounts for a lot of pain and suffering and sometimes (much too often) even death. All these, in most of cases, do not have to happen. What is needed is:

- understanding how fall accidents happen
- identifying the trouble areas
- eliminating or minimizing hazards of falling

#### **How do falls happen?**

Statistics show that the majority (60 percent) of falls happen on the same level resulting from slips and trips. The remaining 40 percent are falls from a height. This document will summarize information on "falls on the same level" (slips and trips). Falls from an elevation, such as falls from ladders, roofs, down stairs or from jumping to a lower level, etc., will be discussed in another document since each type of fall requires different features in a fall prevention program.

#### **Slips**

Slips happen where there is too little friction or traction between the footwear and the walking surface. Common causes of slips are:

- wet or oily surfaces
- occasional spills
- weather hazards
- loose, unanchored rugs or mats
- flooring or other walking surfaces that do not have same degree of traction in all areas

#### **Trips**

Trips happen when your foot collides (strikes, hits) an object causing you to lose the balance and, eventually fall. Common causes of tripping are:

- obstructed view
- poor lighting

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- clutter in your way
- wrinkled carpeting
- uncovered cables
- bottom drawers not being closed
- uneven (steps, thresholds) walking surfaces

## **PRACTICES**

Both slips and trips result from some a kind of unintended or unexpected change in the contact between the feet and the ground or walking surface. This shows that good housekeeping, quality of walking surfaces (flooring), selection of proper footwear, and appropriate pace of walking are critical for preventing fall accidents.

### **Housekeeping**

Good housekeeping is the first and the most important (fundamental) level of preventing falls due to slips and trips. It includes:

- cleaning all spills immediately
- marking spills and wet areas
- mopping or sweeping debris from floors
- removing obstacles from walkways and always keeping them free of clutter
- covering cables that cross walkways
- keeping working areas and walkways well lit

Without good housekeeping practices, any other preventive measures such as installation of sophisticated flooring, specialty footwear or training on techniques of walking and safe falling will never be fully effective.

### **Flooring & Decks**

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 is 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.

### **Footwear**

In workplaces where walking surfaces may be oily or wet or where workers spend considerable time outdoors, prevention of fall accidents should focus on selecting proper footwear. Since there is no footwear with anti-slip properties for every condition, consultation with manufacturers' is highly recommended.

Properly fitting and the appropriate type of safety footwear increases comfort and prevents fatigue which, in turn, improves safety for the employee.

### **What can you do to avoid falling at work?**

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It is important remembering that safety is everybody business. However, it is employers' responsibility to provide safe work environment for all employees. Employees can improve their own safety too.

## **You can reduce the risk of slipping on wet flooring or equipment ladders and decks by:**

- taking your time and paying attention to where you are going
- adjusting your stride to a pace that is suitable for the walking surface and the tasks you are doing
- walking with the feet pointed slightly outward
- making wide turns at corners

## **You can reduce the risk of tripping by:**

- always using sufficient light for your tasks
- keeping your work area and equipment cabs clean and uncluttered;
- ensuring that things you are carrying or pushing do not prevent you from seeing any obstructions, spills, etc.

*For further information, see the appropriate current Occupational Health & Safety Legislation.*

