

VOLTS NEWSLETTER

Valuing Our Lives Through Safety

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Being Mindful of Walking and Working Surfaces—Casey Draper

At some point—whether at work, home, or somewhere out and about on a trail—we’ve all fallen over, slipped on, or tripped over something. When this happens, we can usually just stand up, brush ourselves off, and hope no one was videoing the epic fail. However, think about a time when we (or someone that we know) had a very serious or long-lasting disability as the result of a slip, trip, or fall.

Slips, trips, and falls are one of the most common and costly workplace incidents across all industries according to the 2020 Liberty Mutual Workplace Safety Index. This index shows that slips, trips, and falls on the same level cost businesses over \$11 billion last year. Research from the National Safety Council also shows that slips, trips, and falls account for 36 percent of emergency room visits and 65 percent of lost workdays—each incident averages 38 lost workdays costing organizations millions of dollars in lost productivity while driving up their insurance costs.

The good news is that the majority of slip, trip, and fall accidents are preventable. Basic precautions such as good housekeeping, proper footwear, clean and dry walking surfaces, and hazard identification can reduce the likelihood of an injury. These simple solutions—accompanied with an increased effort to being mindful of your walking and working surfaces—can result in injury prevention.

A tool dubbed by the VOLTS Steering Committee as the “Three Level Technique,” is a great implement to add to your safety toolbox to help identify the physical hazards in the work area. This technique



can be very beneficial at the beginning of an observation as a way to help identify possible exposures. After your observation introduction, break down the work area using the “Three Level Technique” in these simple steps.

Step 1: Identify the exposures that are below eye level or on the ground level.

These hazards may include uneven floor surfaces, staircases, raised curbs, or a motor pedestal. Extension cords, welding leads, or other objects in a cluttered walkway can become another common exposure. By identifying these ground-level exposures, we can train our eye and reduce the daily risks of an accident occurring.

Step 2: Identify the exposures that are located at or above your head. Exposures such as overhead work and suspended loads can result in a critical line-of-fire exposure. Poor lighting or low-hanging pipes and beams can be another factor increasing your exposure to injury while working in an area.

Step 3: Identify the hazards seen at eye level, and take the time to process all of the information systematically. By training our brains to slow down and process the work area in a systematic manner, we allow our brains to register all the hazards associated with the working area—not just the ones that are readily seen.

By taking the time to perform a quality observation and follow the recommended work practices established in IPSC’s safety training, we can reduce the potential of an injury to ourselves and others.

Being Mindful of Walking and Working Surfaces—Casey Draper, cont.

Please take this short quiz on Walking/Working Surfaces and email it to a VOLTS Committee Member or place it in one of the VOLTS observation collection boxes. We'll pick a prize

winner from the correct entries received by October 11, 2021, and announce the winner in next month's newsletter.

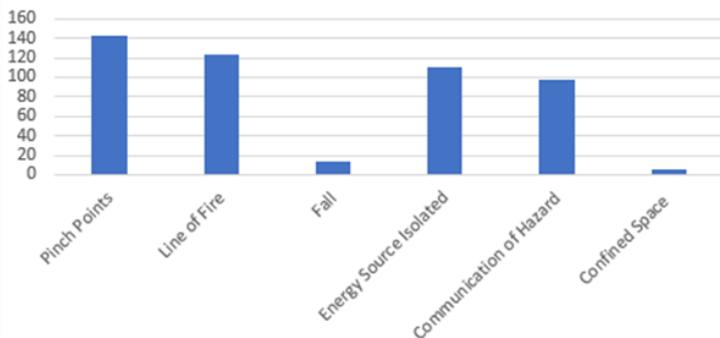
OSHA Walking/Working Surfaces

1. **Accidents caused by walking/working surface hazards are rare in most workplaces.**
a. True b. False
2. **Common walking/working surface hazards include:**
a. Well-maintained floors
b. Clutter and spills on floors
c. Ladders set up on a stable, level surface
3. **The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has no regulations that specifically address walking/working surfaces.**
a. True b. False
4. **If you didn't cause clutter or spills on the floor, you have no responsibility for correcting the hazard.**
a. True b. False
5. **Hazardous conditions on walking/working surfaces are responsible for many walking and working surface accidents.**
a. True b. False
6. **What should you do if you can't eliminate a walking/working surface hazard by yourself?**
a. Ignore it
b. Report it
c. Deal with it only if you have time
7. **Ladders should be inspected before each use.**
a. True b. False
8. **You need to hold onto a ladder railing only while climbing or descending.**
a. True b. False
9. **To save time, it's a good idea to take shortcuts through areas not normally meant for foot traffic instead of using marked walkways.**
a. True b. False
10. **For safety, you need to use the railing only going down stairs.**
a. True b. False

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VOLTS Data Report—Casey Draper

August 2021 Number of Critical Exposures Observed



IPSC Employee Observation Quality



IPSC Employee Contact Rate

1.01

Safety Performance Measure

Maintain the Contact Rate of 1 on a Monthly Basis

August 2021 Top Five At-Risk Exposures

