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Slips, Trips, and Falls

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Supervising Safety Newsletter

Many people may consider slips, trips, and falls to be funny, as long as no one is seriously hurt. This perception is an issue in getting people to take slips, trips, and falls seriously. Some may assume that the colder winter months contribute to the highest percentage of these type of injuries. These injuries can and do occur year-round and are some of the leading causes of occupational injuries nationwide. The U.S. Department of Labor found that slips, trips, and falls account for the majority of all occupational injuries. Slips, trips, and fall injuries account for 15% of accidental deaths and 25% of all injury claims reported annually. More than 65% of lost workdays are also attributed to occupational slip, trip, and fall injuries.

Contributing Factors

Some of the most common contributing factors that lead to slip, trip, and fall injuries are:

- Worker inattention.
- Wet or slippery floors caused by water, oil, or grease.
- Uneven surfaces, potholes, or pathways in disrepair
- Obstructions, such as power cords, debris, or tools in the walkway.
- Inadequate lighting.
- Open drawers or filing cabinets and clutter.
- Snow and ice.



Prevention

Most of the slip, trip, and fall incidents that occur are preventable with general precautions and safety measures put in place to protect workers. Some of the best solutions or reminders for workers are:

- Be aware of your surroundings at all times and pay attention.
- Maintain clear and tidy work areas free of clutter.

- Follow safe walking practices and routes. Do not allow any objects you may be carrying to obstruct your view. Walk up and down stairs, never jump from the last step, and always use handrails.
- Report poor lighting, broken pavement, sidewalks, or handrails.
- Never stand on a chair to reach an object. Always use a ladder in good repair and maintain three points of contact. Remember the ladder safety tips from your annual training.

- Wearing the proper footwear for the job by ensuring boots or shoes are in good repair and have good traction. Wear the right footwear for the job.

- Keep floors clean and dry. In addition to being a slip hazard, continually wet surfaces promote the growth of mold, fungi, and bacteria that can cause infections. Provide warning signs for wet floors or slippery areas.

Use a squeegee or absorbent mats to dry up work surfaces. During wet weather conditions, wipe feet on floor mats as you enter a building.

- Keep aisles and passageways clear and in good repair, with no obstructions across or in aisles that could create a hazard. Use electrical plugs for equipment that are near the work area and avoid running cords across pathways.
- Keep exits free from obstructions. Access to exits must always remain clear.

By taking the time to inspect work areas and remove slip, trip, and fall hazards, we can prevent a coworker from experiencing a more serious injury down the line. It is everyone's responsibility to work safely and report hazards when they are found. Let's all do our part to make our facility safer for everyone.