

Safety Brief

Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls

(Because so many fall-related injuries and deaths occur off the job, consider discussing non-work-related trip and fall hazards with your team.)

Although we've seen it in the cartoons and in the movies a million times, not many people actually slip on banana peels. And while the results may produce a few chuckles in the theater, falls are nothing to laugh at. In fact, some estimates put the number of disabling injuries resulting from falls at over 30,000 per year. The number of deaths is close to 12,000 a year. About one in 10 of these deaths happen in the workplace.

Watch Where You're Going

It's easy to prevent most falls. All you have to do is follow one simple piece of advice: Watch where you're going.

Walking is such a common activity that most of us pay little attention to potential hazards. However, I'd like to ask each of you to put a little more thought into getting where you're going safely. Take the time to pay attention to the more common fall hazards cited by the National Safety Council:



- Hidden steps**
- Loose, irregular surfaces**
- Smooth surfaces**
- Wet spots**
- Oil and grease**

Be prepared to discuss where any of these types of hazards are common in your facility. Also address things not on this list.

Some additional things to look out for include:



- Unsafe chairs**
- Moving too fast**
- Obstructed aisles**
- Bad lighting**
- Improper shoes**

What You Can Do To Help

But instead of going into too much detail about each of these hazards, I'd like to ask each of you for help in preventing them from turning into accidents. I'd like each of you to make an extra effort to really watch where you're going. Sometimes, it's got to be a conscious effort, but I think it's worth it.

Aside from that, there are some housekeeping rules that we can all follow that can prevent trips and falls. If we all put everything in its proper place after using it, we would never have materials piled up in unexpected areas, such as in aisles, or in stairwells. Some other things you can do include:

1. **Report any lighting problems.** This goes for inside and outside. Falls can happen just as easily in the parking lot as on the shop floor. We can prevent at least some of them by making sure we can all see where we're going.
2. **Report any hazardous floors.** If there are loose tiles, torn carpets, broken or loose floor boards, or bumps or cracks in the concrete surfaces, let someone know.
3. **If you are involved in any clean-up operations. Please mark off slippery floors.**
4. **If you notice a spill or greasy surface, clean it up or report it to someone who can.**
5. **Never ever run cords,** cables or hoses across high-traffic areas. If it can't be avoided, make sure the area is marked off
6. **Report any special hazards that may be lurking in stairwells or in other areas of the facility.** These include loose or missing ladder rungs or dangerous areas on the loading dock.

Conclusion

Preventing slips and falls has to be a team effort. Walking around a spill or stepping over an open drawer might keep you safe, but what about the next person who walks by?

By correcting the hazard or reporting it, you keep not only yourself safe, but your co-workers as well.



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