Falls Meeting Kit

What's At Stake

BIG PICTURE

Slips and falls are a leading cause of workplace injuries. What do experts recommend as the single most important step to take in preventing slips and falls? Simple…keep floors clean, dry, and free of obstruction. When it comes to safeguards against slips and falls, nothing is more important than good housekeeping.

Most workplace falls which cause injury or death are falls from the same level, not from heights. Remember the big picture. Failure to reduce and eliminate slips, trips erodes the bottom line of business and impacts quality of life of workers.

What's the Danger

FALLS – EVERPRESENT DANGER

Falls are among the leading causes of death in the workplace and a fall at work can put you out of commission. Weeks in pain, months in a cast or years in a wheelchair can be the result of a simple slip, trip or fall. Even a fall from the same level – instead of a fall from a height – can cause a fatal or crippling injury.

The danger is amped up because slip, trip, and fall hazards are found in just about every work environment.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

PROTECTION FROM FALLS

The following are the ways to avoid falls in the workplace.

1. **Appropriate clothing:** Wear boots or shoes that have skid – resistant soles and are free from oil and grease. When working on slippery surfaces or in icy weather, wear non-slip soles. Be aware that overly long, loose pant cuffs are **a tripping hazard.**
2. **Clear paths:** If you see something in an aisle such as litter or extension cords, move or report them. Also watch for loose or torn carpeting, mats or runners. Don't store things on or near stairways. Watch out for unexpected hazards such as unguarded floor openings. Report them immediately so they can be correctly covered and guarded.
3. **Respect slickness:** Obey signs such as "Caution: Wet Floor." Clean up spills immediately. When you come indoors from rain or snow, your wet footwear slides

more easily. Newly waxed and high gloss floors are also hazards. On slippery or rough surfaces, take small steps and walk slowly.

4. **Walk safely:** Keep your head up. Don’t run down a hallway. Never engage in horseplay. Use stairways’ handrails. When carrying a load, make sure you can see over or around it. On slick surfaces keep your hands at your side for balance and take caution, short steps. Don’t run.
5. **Office smarts:** Don’t tip back in a chair. Chairs should have five legs to prevent tipping. Keep drawers of desks, cupboards and filing cabinets closed.
6. **Elevate wisely:** Don’t stand on makeshift platforms such as a chair on top of a desk. Instead, correctly use a stepstool, ladder or scaffold.
7. **Working at heights:** Be sure to use the required fall protection equipment and all safe procedures when working at heights. Many falls from heights are actually caused by tripping or slipping.
8. **Shed light:** Poor lighting can camouflage hazards, so replace fixtures or bulbs that don’t work. In areas where no fixtures are installed, make sure obstacles have been removed. Turn on lights before entering an area.
9. **Practice stair care:** There’s always a potential for trips and falls on stairways that are too steep or not steep enough. Always walk up and down stairs slowly, one step at the time. Numerous workers have been injured on stairways by going to fast or by skipping steps. And if you must carry a load on stairs, make sure the load doesn’t block your vision, and try to keep one hand free to hold the railing.
10. **Personal regimen:** Get enough rest and sleep. Exercise regularly. Eat nutritious well-balanced diet and include vitamin C. More alert, physically and mentally fit workers are better equipped to handle safety challenges like slips, trips and falls in a successful way.

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING AND CLEAN UP TIPS

Nothing is more important than good housekeeping.

- Wipe up grease, water and other slick substances as soon as they are discovered. Cover icy and greasy spots with sand, dirt or other absorbent material.
- If repair or maintenance work is being done, keep equipment and the surrounding area free of scraps and debris.
- Secure lose or light material to prevent it from blowing away in the wind and, as with any other aspect of rig operation, don’t let material fall from any level.
- Inspect your work area and machinery or tools before you start work.

FINAL WORD

Slips, Trips, and Falls are a leading causes of workplace injury and death. They also cause a great deal of pain and suffering. Take slip, trip, and fall hazards seriously, and don’t let them trip you up.