

Accident Prevention: Slips, Trips, and Falls

Slips, trips and falls are a significant cause of injuries both at work and away. For example, the 2007 edition of the National Safety Council's Injury Facts reports there were 284,380 non-fatal slips, trips and falls and 799 fatal slips, trips and falls, at work in 2006. These facts should alert you to the importance of recognizing hazards that can cause slips, trips, and falls and the value of establishing programs to inspect and correct the hazards.

Common Causes of Slips

- Spills causing wet surfaces
- Weather-related surface conditions
- Shoe soles not compatible with floor surfaces
- Incomplete floor cleaning
- Debris collecting on walking surfaces
- Non-uniform floor surface
- Carpeting or mats not secured
- Transitional areas such as doorways and ramps

Preventing Slips

- Clean up spills quickly and block off wet areas
- Have walk-off mats and a snow-removal program
- Urge employees to maintain good shoe soles
- Rinse floor detergents and dry the floor
- Keep debris cleaned from walkways
- Smooth out floor areas where necessary
- Tape or otherwise secure floor coverings
- Mark ramps so the slope is apparent

Common Causes of Trips

- Hoses and cables on floor
- Uneven walking surfaces
- Debris allowed to collect in walkways
- Inadequate walkway lighting
- Obstructed view of walkway
- Wrinkled or unsecured carpeting or mats

Preventing Trips

- Run hoses and cables through walkover devices or overhead
- Repair and mark floor areas that may be uneven
- Good housekeeping can keep debris under control
- Keep walkways clear of intrusions that may obstruct activity
- Secure floor coverings to prevent wrinkling

**Common Causes of Falls**

- Faulty ladders
- Improper ladder use
- Wrong ladder for the job
- Using makeshift ladders such as chairs or boxes
- Not using stair handrails when taking the stairs
- Ramps, docks and floor holes
- Getting out of vehicles

Preventing Falls

Prior to climbing, inspect ladders
Set the feet on a stable surface and use the proper lean angle
Select a ladder that fits the job at hand
Never stand on a chair
Use the handrail when taking the stairs
Mark ramps, docks and holes so they are highly visible
Use vehicle grip bars or handles to get in and out of vehicles