

SLIP, TRIP, AND FALL SAFETY

TRAINING OBJECTIVE:

To point out one of the most common - and preventable - causes of serious injury and deaths. General practices will be explained to help avoid these types of accidents. The employee will be more aware of how these injuries are sustained and how they can be reduced.

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW:

Most of us have experienced a slip, trip, or even a fall at one time or another. Most times we do not sustain an injury, but the potential is high. The potential for a slip, trip, or fall to occur is always present at our sites due to the nature of the work performed. For every 10,000 workers in the nation, 31 have injuries due to slips and falls.

This type of injury is responsible for 20% of all occupational injuries. Falls kill approximately 12,000 people a year, with 1500 of them occurring at work. That makes them the biggest cause of accidental after traffic accidents. Falling on stairs is responsible for approximately 33,000 people disabled each year. Many more individuals sustain lesser injuries such as, strains, sprains, and fractures.

OSHA has numerous regulations designed to reduce slips, trips, and falls. These include ladder design, guarding of open areas, clean floors, and general housekeeping for passageways. All of these issues can result in a citation due to the potential for an injury to occur. These hazards can be prevented in a few easy steps when employees are aware that a hazard existing.

GENERAL HAZARDS:

There are a number of common causes of slips, trips, and falls. At one time or another, these hazards are prevalent at our facility. Some of these are:

- Unsafe ladders
- Unsafe stairs
- Obstruction in walkways or on stairs
- Slippery or uneven surfaces
- Improper shoes
- Moving too fast
- Poor lighting
- Being tired or distracted

The most typical cause of this type of injury is not paying attention. In today's society, we tend to be in a hurry to complete a job or get from one place or another with a multitude of issues on our minds. Not paying attention to our

surroundings can ultimately result in an injury. The steps to reducing these hazards are in identification and correction.

IDENTIFYING HAZARDS:

Learning to identify hazards that might cause you to slip, trip, or fall is the key to avoiding accidents. The following areas identify the most common causes of this type of accident and how to avoid them.

LADDERS:

The most important thing to remember about ladders is to inspect them carefully prior to each use. If any part of the ladder is missing, loose, or otherwise defective, take the ladder out of service. Check for:

- Loose or broken rungs or steps.
- Missing or broken spreaders, tie rods, and braces.

Setting up ladders carelessly can also cause an accident. Make sure you have solid footing, proper angles, and enough overhang. Once the ladder is set up properly, they must be used properly as well. Always use ropes to bring up supplies, wear belts to tie off with, and keep your weight centered between the rails.

STAIRS:

Reducing injuries on stairs involves attention to maintenance as well as individual safety habits. Stair treads should have a nonslip surface, with an abrasive covering. Railings need to be in place and firmly anchored. Lighting in stair wells needs to be adequate for people to see where they are going. Basic steps to follow are:

- Keep stairs clear at all times: **do not use stairs as storage areas.**
- Always use the hand railing.
- Don't carry anything that blocks your vision.
- Keep one hand free to support yourself or break a fall.
- **Watch where you are going-at all times!**

Report all problems with stairs immediately to a supervisor and do not use them until they are fixed.

RAMPS AND LOADING DOCKS:

Slips and falls are common on loading docks. The best way to prevent them is to be sure that ramps have a slip resistant surface, and that handrails are in place. Use a highly visible marking to distinguish change from the floor surface level to a ramp.

Docks are often exposed to weather and oil drips/leaks from motors. Many docks have concrete floors which are porous and will absorb oil. Rainy and snowy conditions will cause these surfaces to become slick. Use a type of abrasive metal plates for traction as well as provide for proper drainage. **Never jump off the dock!**

LEVEL GROUND:

All employees are responsible for good housekeeping. Poor housekeeping conditions could cause trips, slips, and falls. The following areas are prime concerns with level ground:

Floor Surfaces: Uneven surfaces are a major cause of trips and falls. Warped wood, loose or missing tiles, or mats and rugs that have turned up edges should be replaced/repared immediately.

Lighting: Employees are not able to clearly see ahead of them or any obstruction in the way when lighting is poor. Ensure that adequate lighting is available in all work areas of your facilities. Replace burnt-out bulbs immediately.

Obstructions: Any time that materials, tools, and debris are left on the floor, accidents could happen. Always remove items from aisle and walkways. Do not use aisles as storage areas. Provide adequate trash cans for all waste debris. Power cords, cable, and hoses cause a trip hazard and are not to be used as a permanent means.

Slippery Surfaces: Wet and smooth surfaces are often slippery. If possible, use a slip-resistant floor material where possible. Always have a de-ice material on hand for adverse weather conditions. Chemical spills need to be cleaned up immediately, no matter how small the spill.

Attitude: Horseplay on the job is an all-too-common cause of trips and falls. It is important to stress that while at work, work is performed. Never play catch with materials, nor toss material around when moving or loading.

CONCLUSION:

Slips, trips, and falls are especially common and troublesome because they can occur any time during any activity. Paying attention to your surroundings and eliminating potentially hazardous areas will reduce your chance of being injured. The attached list provides some tips for prevention. Remember, you can prevent most slips, trips, and falls. Take the first step and do your part.

SOME OUNCES OF PREVENTION

- Wear shoes with nonskid soles and flat heels.
- Be careful of loose pant cuffs or other garments you could trip over.
- Don't tilt your stool or chair back; keep all four of its legs on the floor.
- Stay away from the edges of loading docks, manholes, and similar places where falls could occur.
- Use a ladder, not a box or chair, to reach high places.
- Don't jump from platforms.
- Don't carry or push loads that block your vision.
- Use wrenches with good heads and teeth so they won't slip when you pull on them. And don't use a "cheater" on a wrench. If the job calls for a bigger wrench, use one.
- Look out for broken concrete, manholes, uncovered drains and similar hazards.
- Walk slowly, sliding your feet, on surfaces that are wet, slippery or uneven.
- Walk, don't run - and change directions slowly.
- Step over or around obstructions, not on them.
- Keep your hands at your sides, not in your pockets, for balance.
- Make it your responsibility to report any hazards, don't depend on someone else to do it.
- Pay attention to what you're doing and where you are going.
- Clean up spills and leaks right away.
- Before there is enough lighting before you move ahead.
- Keep walkways and aisles clear of obstructions.
- Be sure you have enough lighting.