

Avoiding Slips, Trips, & Falls

Quick Tips

Facts about Slips, Trips & Falls

- Can result from a number of causes, including: improper use of a chair, walking without proper illumination or while distracted, improper footwear, weather, or falling off a ladder
- Hazards leading to slips, trips & falls are often overlooked but cause many injuries, ranging from minor cuts and strains to more disabling conditions
- Hazards are easy to create and easy to correct; Learn to recognize slip, trip & fall hazards



Fall Hazards: Falls often result from slips & trips but you may be injured if you fall from an elevation:

- Using makeshift items to gain height
- Not sitting properly in a chair or leaning (boxes, buckets, chairs, etc.)
- Carrying large or too many items on stairs

Slip Hazards: A slip occurs when there is too little friction or traction between footwear and the walking surface. Some common causes of slips include:

- Slippery floor surfaces
- Liquid, moisture, or ice on floor
- Oil or grease on floor
- Footwear w/o non-skid soles
- Food, trash or objects on floor



Trip Hazards: A trip occurs when a person's foot (or lower leg) contacts an object or drops to a lower level unexpectedly resulting in a loss of balance. Some of the more common causes of trips are:

- Furniture that creates obstacles
- Material in aisles/stairways
- Cords crossing aisles
- Protrusions in aisles/floor
- Open file cabinet drawers
- Holes, loose flooring
- Loose, ripped, bunched carpet/rugs
- Unsafe stairway conditions
- Poor lighting
- Floor level changes
- Hard-to-see steps
- Uneven elevator cars

Preventing Injuries:

Good housekeeping is one of the most important methods for preventing falls due to slips & trips. It includes:

- Cleaning up all spills immediately
- Marking spills and wet areas
- Mopping or sweeping debris from floors
- Removing obstacles from walkways and always keeping them free of clutter
- Securing (tacking, taping, etc.) mats, rugs and carpets that do not lay flat
- Always closing file cabinet or storage drawers
- Covering cables that cross walkways
- Keeping work areas and walkways well lit
- Replacing used light bulbs and faulty switches

Without good housekeeping practices, other preventive measures, such as installation of sophisticated flooring or specialty footwear will never be fully effective.



Using the Stairs:

- Use the handrail from start to finish
- Avoid carrying loads on stairways or only carry loads that you can see over
- Keep your eyes on where you're going and descend stairs slowly to keep your balance and identify tripping hazards
- Test potentially slippery stairs by tapping them with your foot
- Going up or down, keep weight on your back leg until your front foot is safely on the next step; this maintains your center of gravity

Walking on Slippery Surfaces:

- Take small steps – shorter than your foot length – to keep your center of balance under you
- Walk with your toes pointed outward; this provides a wider, more stable base of support for maintaining balance
- Turn gradually; a sharp turn results in a sideways force that can cause loss of balance and a fall
- Keep both hands free for balance, rather than in your pockets
- Wear shoes with slip resistant soles, or studded shoe pullovers for walking on ice surfaces
- Use sidewalks/walkways that have been cleared of ice and snow