

# 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



**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

**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

## 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

[Training](#) on preventing slips, trips, and falls is available in PCC's learning management system.