SLIPS, TRIPS, FALLS

GENERAL

Slips, trips, and falls are a major cause of workplace accidents and injuries. Slips occur when friction is lost between the working surface and a person’s footwear. Trips occur when a person’s center of gravity goes beyond their point of balance to a point where they can or can’t recover sometimes resulting in a fall. There are two types of falls. These are same level falls and falls to a lower level. It is important to note a person does not have to fall a great distance to be seriously hurt. Injuries can include sprains/strains, fractures and even death.

Common causes of Slips/Trips/Falls

- Movement of underfoot surfaces (e.g., mats or ladders).
- Collapse or breakage of support structures (e.g., floorboards, ladder rungs, scaffolding).
- Slippery floor surfaces because of composition, age, finish, or lack of maintenance.
- Sudden change in traction brought about by walking from one floor surface (e.g., carpeted floor) to another (e.g., tiled floor).
- Stairs – steep, irregular treads, missing or worn treads, clutter, no handrails, poor or uneven lighting, glare from windows, distraction (e.g., signs, posters, texting) in the area of the stairwell, doors that block the stairs when open.
- Extension cords, power cables, air hoses, pipes or conduits set on or near the floor.
- Projecting parts on machines or equipment.
- Seasonal conditions – rain or mud on walking surfaces
- Imperfections in walking/working surfaces
- Wet (water, oil, chemicals) and dry (dust, dirt, vegetation) debris on walking/working surfaces

Slip/trip/fall prevention

- Proper Housekeeping -Keep all walking/ working surfaces clean, dry (where possible), and orderly;
- Keep all floors, workplaces, and passageways free of trip hazards such as protruding nails, splinters, holes, or loose boards, cords, wires, etc.
- Protect employees by placing covers and/or guardrails around open pits, tanks, vats, ditches, etc.
• Place Guardrails on all platforms 4 feet or more above the adjacent floor or ground. This includes mezzanines, loading docks, roofs, runways etc.
• The floor or roof of a building shall not be overloaded with materials and/or equipment over the approved load limits. Elevated storage and other platforms shall be marked with the load bearing weight;
• All aisles and passageways shall be clearly marked, have adequate space for passage of both moving equipment and employees, have safe clearances at all turns, doors, and passageways, and shall not be obstructed by physical barriers or stored materials.
• Make sure lighting is adequate.
• Toe boards must be installed around floor and wall openings and where the potential exists for tools and other materials to fall on personnel working below;
• Do not store equipment or material on stairways, do not carry objects that may obstruct your vision while climbing or descending stairs
• Eliminate distractions while walking (no talking on the phone, texting)
• Stay on designated and familiar walkways and avoid steep hills or slippery areas.
• Avoid unstable or slippery surfaces (wet grass, tree leaves/branches/seeds, cardboard, oily surfaces, gravel areas, muddy areas, etc.).
• Do not walk backwards on any unguarded elevated surface (loading docks, roof areas, etc.).
• Do not use unstable items (chairs, boxes, buckets) to gain access to elevated items. Use a ladder correctly.
• Use the handrail when climbing or descending stairs.