

Slips Trips & Falls



With the change in the weather, comes a change in the working surfaces. In Canada, every year, workers are injured due to slips, trips and falls. These injuries can result in pain and suffering and sometimes even death. It is important to remember that injuries caused from slips and trips are preventable!

Slips & Trips Incidents

Slips and trips are often regarded as non-fatal or minor injuries. In fact, slips and trips may not only lead to bruises and sprains, but more serious injuries may also result.



SLIPS

Slips happen where there is too little friction or traction between the footwear and the walking surface.

Common causes of slips are:

- wet or oily surfaces
- occasional spills
- weather hazards – such as snow, ice, and mud
- loose, unanchored mats
- flooring or other walking surfaces that do not have same degree of traction in all areas



TRIPS

Trips happen when your foot or leg collides with an object, causing you to lose your balance and eventually fall.

Common causes of trips are:

- obstructed view
- poor lighting
- poor housekeeping (i.e. clutter)
- uncovered cables
- uneven walking surfaces
- cord protrusion
- distraction or inattention to walking path

Slip and Trip Prevention in the Work Place

Both slips and trips result from some kind of unintended or unexpected change in the contact between the feet and the ground or walking surface. Good housekeeping, quality of walking surfaces, selection of proper footwear, and appropriate pace of walking are critical for preventing falls.

— Housekeeping —

Good housekeeping is the first and the most important level of preventing falls due to slips and trips.

This includes:

- marking or monitoring spills and wet areas
- mopping or sweeping debris from floors
- removing obstacles from walkways and always keeping them free of clutter
- covering cables that cross walkways
- keeping working areas and walkways well lit
- replacing used light bulbs and faulty switches
- coiling stray cords, or securing them with tape or appropriate covering



— Walking Surfaces —

Changing or modifying walking surfaces is the next level of preventing slips and trips. Recoating or replacing floors, installing mats, pressure-sensitive abrasive strips or abrasive-filled paint-on coating and metal or synthetic decking can further improve safety and reduce risk of falling. However, it is critical to remember that high-tech flooring requires good housekeeping as much as any other flooring. In addition, resilient, non-slippery flooring prevents or reduces foot fatigue and contributes to slip prevention measures.

— Footwear —

In workplaces where floors may be oily or wet or where workers spend considerable time outdoors, prevention of falls should focus on selecting proper footwear. Since there is no footwear with anti-slip properties for every condition, consultation with manufacturers is highly recommended. Properly fitting and maintained (*i.e. not having exposed toe caps, worn out soles, holes, etc*) footwear increases comfort and prevents fatigue which, in turn, improves safety for the employee.

Personal Responsibility in Slip & Trip Prevention

It is important to remember that safety is everyone's business. While it is the employers' responsibility to provide a safe work environment for all employees, employees can improve their own safety too.

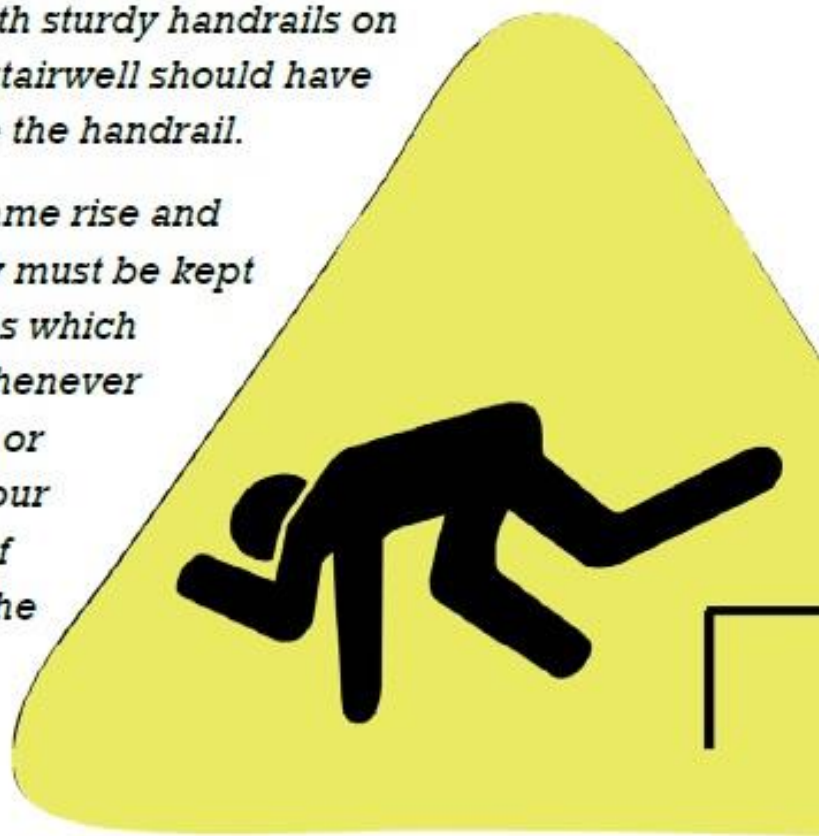
To prevent slips, trips, and falls you should:

- walk carefully on wet and waxed floors
- clean up or report all spills
- wipe your feet when coming in from the rain or snow
- remove obstacles from walkways and always keep them free of clutter
- don't carry a stack of objects too tall to see over
- use a safe stepladder, not a box, chair, or countertop, to reach tall objects
- keep cords away from pathways
- as you walk, check your path for anything sticking out - drawers, supplies, trash cans, brooms, and mops
- watch out for uneven floors and changes in floor level
- keep your hands at your sides, not in your pockets
- taking your time and paying attention to where you are going
- adjust your stride to a pace that is suitable for the walking surface and the tasks you are doing
- walk with the feet pointed slightly outward
- make wide turns at corners
- use installed light sources that provide sufficient light for your tasks
- use a flashlight if you enter a dark room where there is no light
- ensure that things you are carrying or pushing do not prevent you from seeing any obstructions, spills, etc.

Falls on Stairs

Stairwells should be well lit, with sturdy handrails on both sides. Persons using the stairwell should have one hand free to be able to use the handrail.

All the steps should have the same rise and depth, with visible edges. They must be kept free of grease, oil and obstacles which could cause slips and trips. Whenever possible, avoid carrying heavy or bulky objects which obscure your vision and/or require the use of both hands, or better yet, use the elevator. Carry smaller, lighter loads and make more trips, or obtain help with the load.



Stairway Safety Do's and Don'ts

DO:

- use handrails
- watch out for loose or worn decking
- report burned-out bulbs or poor lighting
- pick up any foreign objects
- clean up all spills immediately
- watch where you're going

DON'T:

- store or throw anything on steps or stairways
- RUN!

Summary

1. Slips, trips and falls are preventable
2. Prevention involves not only workplace conditions/hazards, but the behavior or individuals
3. Everyone needs to work together to identify and correct hazards
4. Everyone needs to observe each other, and commend and correct in a positive