

Safety Topic of the Month

Slips, Trips, and Falls

Info taken from the Center for Disease Control and the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

Prevent falls due to slips and trips

Housekeeping

Good housekeeping is the first and the most important (fundamental) level of preventing falls due to slips and trips. It includes:

- Cleaning all spills immediately
- Marking spills and wet areas
- Removing obstacles from walkways and always keeping them free of clutter
- Always closing file cabinet or storage drawers
- Covering cables that cross walkways

Without good housekeeping practices, any other preventive measures such as installation of sophisticated flooring, specialty footwear or training on techniques of walking and safe falling will never be fully effective.

Flooring

Changing or modifying walking surfaces is the next level of preventing slip 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.

Footwear

In workplaces where floors may be oily or wet or where workers spend considerable time outdoors, prevention of fall accidents 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 footwear increases comfort and prevents fatigue which, in turn, improves safety for the employee.

What can you do to avoid falling at work?

You can reduce the risk of slipping on wet flooring by:

- Taking your time and paying attention to where you are going.
- Adjusting your stride to a pace that is suitable for the walking surface and the tasks you are doing.
- Walking with the feet pointed slightly outward.
- Making wide turns at corners.

You can reduce the risk of tripping by:

- Keeping walking areas clear from clutter or obstructions.
- Keeping flooring in good condition.
- Always using light sources that provide sufficient light for your tasks.
- Using a flashlight if you enter a dark room where there is no light.
- Ensuring that things you are carrying or pushing do not prevent you from seeing any obstructions, spills, etc.