

Slips and Falls - Avoid Slip-Ups

Slips and falls are a leading cause of workplace injuries. What do experts recommend as the single most important step to take in preventing slips and falls? Simple...keep floors clean, dry, and free of obstruction. When it comes to safeguards against slips and falls, nothing is more important than good housekeeping.

When you walk through a work area, look for spills, grease spots or dust (flour and machine byproducts can be highly slippery). Water spilled by drinking fountains or tracked in on wet or snowy days can create a major hazard. Look around and be aware of wet areas or objects on the floor. Then take the time to do something about it. Clean up the hazard or place cones or hazard signs nearby, warning of the danger. People can walk on extremely slippery surfaces by modifying their speed and stride, provided they know about the dangerous condition. It's the lack of warning that can cause problems. An unexpected shift from a smooth to a slick surface heightens the likelihood of a slip or fall. Look for signs of flooring change. Changes in lighting and floor color can conceal a change in friction or angle between adjacent surfaces. Wherever possible, waxes and polishes should cover an entire area, extending to natural breaks in flooring. Choose footwear according to floor surface.

Consider slips and falls when you're doing a job. Some tasks, such as pushing loads, may require special attention to slip-resistant floor surfaces or carefully selected sole material and treads. For some jobs, better lighting or a stable brace is helpful. Carefully placed and mounted hand rails, poles or hip bars may help operators brace themselves. This reduces reliance on foot/floor friction, which thereby reduces the potential for slipping.

Slips can occur because of how you walk on a surface. Some simple things you can do to minimize your chance of slipping and falling would be to wear appropriate footwear; watch where you're going; take slow, short steps where slip potential is high; and use hand holds where possible.

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