Avoid Scares on Stairs



WHAT'S AT STAKE?

If traveling up or down stairs is a daily part of your job, you may be at risk of injury, especially if carrying items.

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

Slips, trips and falls are the most common stairway danger. Carrying things may impair your line of vision, and carrying things typically means you aren't using handrails. Even a light load can change the way you walk, creating risk of losing balance.

Littering and poor housekeeping create fall hazards. Slippery surfaces result from spilled liquids, or from cleaning but not allowing stairs to dry before use.

Stairwells may present a danger to personal security. A poorly lit area could conceal a person who may harm you.

Example

A security guard broke an ankle after falling down the stairs at a retail women's clothing store. An investigation found that the stairs were in bad repair and poorly lighted.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Report to your supervisor or maintenance department if stairs aren't properly lit. Note if stair railings are broken or pulled out of the wall. Make sure that safety strips are intact.

Do your part to ensure that anything dropped on the stairs or landings is quickly removed. Report dirty, obstructed or littered stairs.

Work with your supervisor and coworkers to analyze hazards. Plan safer ways of moving supplies or small equipment – perhaps transporting fewer items or carrying items that don't require both hands. Mechanized equipment or carts might carry things on stairs or the elevator.

Wear well-fitting shoes with slipresistant soles.

Keep fire doors shut so that in case of fire, stairways remain free of smoke and toxic vapors.

Remember that fire doors are normally locked so you can enter fire stairwells but cannot exit onto another floor.

FINAL WORD

If you bound up or down stairs with your morning coffee, be aware of the danger of hurrying. And pay attention to safety issues such as housekeeping and adequate lighting.