Don’t Let Unsafe Conditions & Acts Trip You Up!



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Safety Talk

What’s at Stake?
Slips, trips and falls are the second-leading cause of workplace deaths, next to traffic incidents. They cause over 700 deaths every year, accounting for more than 15 percent of all workplace fatalities. Slips, trips and falls are also the leading source of workplace accidents, with over 200,000 reported every year.

What’s the Danger?
Slip, trip and fall hazards fall into two broad categories: unsafe conditions and unsafe acts. An unsafe condition is a condition of your workplace that’s likely to cause injury or property damage. Unsafe conditions can cause slip, trip and fall hazards anywhere you walk and work, including:

- Office and shop floors;
- Construction site grounds;
- Parking structures;
- Restaurant kitchens;
- Loading docks and warehouses; and
- Hospital rooms and classrooms.

Walking and working in these areas can become hazardous from one or more of these unsafe conditions:

- Unsafe floors and surfaces;
- Unsafe stairs and railings; and
- Poor lighting.

An unsafe act is a task or activity done in an unsafe or dangerous manner which can harm you or others. These acts include unsafe work practices, risky behaviors, shortcuts, and other human factors.

Examples of unsafe work practices include:

- Spilling coffee on the breakroom floor and not cleaning it up.
- Mopping the floor and not putting out caution signs to warn people that the floor is wet.
- Talking or texting on your cell phone as you walk.
- Hurrying and not keeping your eyes on your path, especially when walking on uneven or slippery surfaces.
- Not reporting the burned-out lightbulb in the stairwell.

At work, not paying attention to where you are going or knowing where you should be is a risky—and potentially deadly behavior. Other risky behaviors include rushing, running, and taking shortcuts.

Human factors are personal characteristics, traits, or conditions which can affect how you do your job and increase your risk of a slip, trip, or fall. Age, eyesight, physical condition and medications you take are examples of human factors.

How to Protect Yourself

Preventing slips, trips, and falls starts with identifying the hazards around the workplace. These hazards may involve unsafe conditions or unsafe acts. Once slip, trip and fall hazards are identified, your employer must do one or more of the following:

- Eliminate the hazard through engineering controls, such as slipresistant flooring.
- Minimize the risk of injury through administrative controls and safe work practices, such as providing wet-floor signage.
- Provide training on hazards, safe work practices, and the use of personal protective equipment; and n Protect employees against injury by providing personal protective equipment.

FINAL WORD

Avoiding unsafe conditions and not participating in unsafe acts can help you avoid falling for slip, trip and fall hazards on the job