

Don't slip up on fall prevention



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Falls are the second leading cause of accidental deaths in North America – second only to motor vehicle accidents.

Most falls occur on the same level rather than from a height. They are often caused by slips and trips, making them easy to prevent.

Slips occur when the foot loses traction on a floor surface. This can occur because the surface is highly polished or because it has a spill of water, oil, grease, mud, fine powder or other slippery materials on it.

Here are some tips for preventing slips:

- Wear non-slip footwear. Soles which are made of non-slippery material will help you maintain traction.
- Slow down. Chances of slipping or falling are greatly increased when you are moving too fast. Never run in a work area and slow down to speeds appropriate to the walking surface.
- Wipe up spills promptly. A common spill which can cause slips and falls is the water or mud which accumulates in an entranceway. Other hazards are grease and oil leaking from machinery, and even beverages spilled on the floor.
- If a spill cannot be cleaned up right away, mark it so that someone does not accidentally step on it. It is also important to barricade floors after they have been wet-mopped.
- Make the necessary repairs or adjustments to equipment and machinery to prevent drips and spills. Drip pans may be needed in places where these spills are likely to occur.
- Floors should be covered with non-slip materials, especially in areas which tend to get wet or greasy such as kitchens and shop floors. If you are cleaning such surfaces, be sure to use the correct products so you do not damage the special chemical or mineral finish.
- Floors which are on an incline can also cause slips. Ramps and other sloping surfaces should be clearly marked and covered in slip resistant material.
- Items on the floor can also cause slips. These may include loose rugs or

items such as bolts or pencils on the floor.

Pay attention if you have a close call involving slipping; for instance, if you slip and catch yourself before you fall. Try to determine what caused it and correct the situation.

Slipping is serious business. It can cause falls which result in serious, even fatal, injuries.