Seven Ways to Avoid Slips, Trips, and Falls



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WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Slips happen when there's not enough friction or traction between your feet (shoes) and the surface you're walking or working on.

Trips happen when your foot or lower leg hits an object and your upper body keeps on going, causing you to lose balance.

Falls happen when you slip, or trip and you're thrown too far off balance.

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

Falls are among the leading causes of death in the workplace and a fall at work can put you out of commission. Weeks in pain, months in a cast or years in a wheelchair can be the result of a simple slip, trip or fall. Even a fall from the same level – instead of a fall from a height – can cause a fatal or crippling injury.

The danger is amped up because slip, trip, and fall hazards are found in just about every work environment you can think of.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Here are 7 ways to stop slip, trip, and fall accidents:

1. Slow down

- Many falls occur when a person walks too fast through the work area.

- You’re not in a race and there’s no prize for getting to the breakroom first. Even if there was, it would be hard to eat those donuts your co-worker brought if you’ve got a broken jaw caused by a fall.

2. Watch out!

- Watch for clutter and spills and for unexpected changes in the floor level, such as a step up, floor drains, or potholes and grates in the parking garage.
- Watch for hazards such as loose floor tile, loose carpeting and broken stair surfaces. Report these defects immediately so they can be.
- Hallways, stairways, warehouse aisles and other traffic areas should be bright enough to see where you are going. If not, report issues to your supervisor.

3. Clothing *not* optional

- Wear well-fitting shoes with a low heel. Keep laces tied to prevent tripping.
- It’s possible to trip over your own clothing. Baggy or flared pants are sometimes to blame.

4. Hands free

- Keep your hands free when you walk, to help you catch your balance if you start to.
- Don’t walk with your hands in your pockets.
- Do put your phone in your pocket or leave it at your workstation so you won’t be tempted to text or use it while

5. Move it

- Don’t leave equipment, tools or materials on the floor.
- Don’t block exits and aisles with materials or equipment.
- Don’t leave items on stairs, even for just a moment.
- Don’t run cords, cables or hoses across walkways.
- If you do have to carry something, make sure you can see over it or around.

6. Keep it shut

- Always close drawers, even if they are in an area where you wouldn’t expect someone to trip over
- Cap and close bottles, cans, drums, and other containers to prevent their contents from spilling and creating a slip, trip, and fall

7. Stay alert

- Your chances for a tripping accident—or any accident— are greater if you are tired or distracted.

FINAL WORD

Slips, Trips, and Falls are a leading causes of workplace injury and death. They also cause a great deal of pain and suffering. Take slip, trip and fall hazards seriously, and don’t let them trip you up.