Slip, Trip, Fall: The #3 Non-Fatal Injury Cause and How We Stop It Meeting Kit



WHAT’S AT STAKE

Slips, trips, and falls remain one of the top causes of non-fatal workplace injuries, and they can happen in any environment — from warehouses and offices to outdoor sites and production floors. A slick surface, an uneven step, a loose cord, or a simple moment of inattention can send a worker to the ground instantly. These incidents may seem minor, but they often result in sprains, fractures, bruises, back injuries, or long recovery times that affect both the worker and the entire team.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

Slip, trip, and fall incidents seem simple, but they happen fast and catch people off guard. The danger is that you don’t always notice the hazard — a wet patch, an uneven step, a hidden object — until you’re already falling.

Surfaces that look safe can change suddenly. A small spill, loose gravel, condensation, or a worn floor tile can make your footing disappear in an instant. In many cases, workers don’t see the hazard until it’s too late.

#3 Leading Cause of Non-Fatal Injuries

According to recent U.S. and Canadian workplace injury data:

- Slips, trips, and falls are the #3 leading cause of non-fatal injuries across all industries.
- They account for over 25% of all reported workplace injuries each year.

Loss of Traction and Stability

Even small changes in the environment affect traction. A thin layer of water, dust, oil mist, or mud can make shoes slide. Carrying materials, rushing, or turning too quickly makes balance worse, leading to unexpected falls.

Clutter, Cords, and Poor Housekeeping

Tools, hoses, boxes, cables, and debris left in walkways create tripping points that blend into the background. These small obstacles cause thousands of preventable injuries every year because workers assume the path is clear.

Distraction and Rushing

Looking at a phone, carrying too much, turning quickly, or moving too fast for conditions increases the risk. When attention shifts, hazards disappear — until you hit them.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Preventing slips, trips, and falls isn't complicated. The conditions that cause these incidents show up in every workplace, so keeping yourself safe starts with simple habits that reduce the chance of losing traction or balance.

Keep Walkways Clear and Surfaces Safe

Clean as you go, remove clutter, and make sure tools, cords, debris, and packaging aren't left in walk paths. If you see a spill, wet spot, or loose floor mat, take care of it or report it so the next person doesn't end up on the ground. Good housekeeping is one of the most effective ways to prevent falls.

Move With Awareness

Rushing, cutting corners, or multitasking while walking increases risk. Slow down in wet or uneven areas, take smaller steps when traction is low, and use handrails when available. Staying alert to floor changes, slopes, and transitions can prevent sudden loss of balance.

What to Do to Prevent Slips, Trips, and Falls

- Wear slip-resistant footwear appropriate for the surface and weather.
- Keep your eyes up and scan ahead for hazards.
- Avoid carrying loads that block your vision.
- Report burned-out lights or poor visibility areas.
- Step carefully on ramps, ladders, platforms, and stairs.
- Use caution when floors are wet, dusty, oily, or freshly cleaned.

Respect Changing Conditions

Weather, shift changes, and busy work periods all affect risk. Rain, snow, mud, and condensation get tracked indoors, making entrances and hallways slick. During high-traffic times, materials pile up faster and distractions increase — so staying alert and adjusting your pace is essential.

FINAL WORD

Slips, trips, and falls happen fast and often in places we least expect them. Taking a few extra seconds to clear walkways, slow down, and watch the ground ahead can prevent the kinds of injuries that keep workers off the job for days or weeks.