

HOW TO PREVENT SAME LEVEL FALLS

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Most workers have a healthy respect for safety when working at heights, but often they aren't as mindful of the same slip, trip and fall hazards that can exist in same-level areas.

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

Falls are a leading cause of workplace injury and death. Many serious incidents occur in falls from the same level, such as when someone slips or trips.

EXAMPLE

A worker enters a workplace with a wet umbrella and doesn't realize that she is dripping water over the tile hallway. Another worker enters and promptly slips on the wet tiling, suffering bruises and a sore back for days afterwards.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

- If you see a spill, attend to it promptly, before anyone slips on it.
- Never leave doors and cabinet drawers open. Unsuspecting co-workers can trip over open drawers or bang their heads or bodies into open cabinet or cupboard doors.
- Low light is a major contributing factor to falls. If areas are poorly lit or bulbs have burned out and not been replaced, report these hazards to your supervisor.
- Never leave objects on stairways or in aisles. People don't expect to trip over a tool or box on a stairway and they aren't watching out for these obstacles.
- Be sure to wear appropriate footwear for the conditions and check that there is plenty of tread to provide good grip on potentially slippery surfaces. Also make sure that your shoe laces are tied tightly at all times.
- Even if you are in a hurry, don't run. You could bump into a co-worker who is carrying a hazardous chemical or operating a sharp tool. Or you might end up running

into the path of a moving forklift or other piece of machinery.

- If you see loose treading on a stairway or raised carpeting or other flooring that could cause someone to trip, don't ignore it. Report it to your supervisor.
- If you can't see around or over an object that you are carrying, you aren't safe and neither is anyone in your path. Get help carrying large or bulky objects and ensure that your chosen path is free of clutter and other workers.

Ensure that handrails and hand holds are securely fastened to walls. A loose rail or hand hold can send a worker tumbling if it suddenly breaks free from a wall.

CONCLUSION

Falls are often made light of in slap-stick comedy, but the results of a fall are often anything but funny. Even a short fall can cause serious head injuries or disabilities from which workers may never fully recover. Watch where you are walking at all times

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. You only need to worry about fall safety if you are working at heights, such as from a ladder.
 - ☐ True
 - ☐ False
2. If you see a spill you should _____.
3. Raised or torn carpeting or linoleum is a major tripping hazard.
 - ☐ True
 - ☐ False
4. Loose handrails or hand holds aren't a hazard.
 - ☐ True
 - ☐ False
5. Objects left on the stairway are easily noticed and are not a hazard.
 - ☐ True
 - ☐ False

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

You get paged to bring a box of materials downstairs to a production area right away. When you see the box, you've been asked to deliver, you find that it's heavy and bulky. You ask your co-worker, Joe, to help you carry it and he says, "Sorry. I'm too busy." You're trying to decide what to do when you get paged again: "Where's that material we asked you to bring?" What should you do?

BEFORE THE TALK – PREPARATION TIPS

1. Print Attendance Sheet to pass around.
2. Help organize a clean-up day in your workplace to remove slip, trip and fall hazards. Deal with clutter and boxes, especially on stairs and in high traffic areas. Re-route obstructing electrical cords. Fill holes and depressions around the property and replace burned out light bulbs.
3. When you inspect stairways, consider the condition of the treads, including strength, slip resistance, dimensions, evenness of surface and visibility of leading edge. Are there any chronic slipping or tripping hazards in your work area—the kind of hazards that reappear as soon as you remove them? Accumulations of scrap and drips of oil from machinery are common repeat offenders. Have your crew look at solutions for eliminating these hazards permanently.
4. Poor lighting is associated with many slips, trips and falls. Ask your workers if they have any concerns about dimly lit areas in and around your plant.
5. Plan to ask your workers to share any stories of same-level trips, slips or falls that they've experienced, and lessons they learned as a result.
6. Plan to discuss when people should be asking for help before trying to move heavy or bulky objects by themselves.
7. Bring in an example of inappropriate (worn out) footwear and appropriate footwear and plan to discuss why appropriate footwear is essential.

AFTER THE TALK - CHECKLIST

The workers who obtained poor results in the questionnaire were followed up.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Observed workers

Task (s):

Date: _____

Refresher training

Topic (s): _____

Date: _____

Others(describe):

Meeting Date: _____

Location: _____

Directed by: _____

NOTES

[illegible]

Meeting material to go:

Safety meeting materials such as presentation tips, PowerPoint presentations, quiz answers and more are downloadable at www.SafetySmart.com

ANSWERS:

1. False
2. Clean it up yourself immediately.
3. True
4. False
5. False