

Preventing Slips and Trips

Toolbox Talk

DON'T BE IN A HURRY

Trips and falls often occur while people are in a hurry, because they often take short cuts and don't pay attention to what they are doing. We all have tried to jump across an obstacle instead of walking "the long way around" to our destination. Practice slowing down and walking surefootedly by avoiding potentially hazardous shortcuts.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR STEP

Avoid injuries by paying attention to where you are walking. Learning to recognize hazards and avoid them saves time, money, and injury. As mentioned previously, resist the temptation to take shortcuts, because these are usually comprised of objects or routes not designed for foot traffic and often consist of unstable, shaky or slippery surfaces.

CLEAN UP SPILLS

Slippery surfaces often don't appear dangerous until you happen to step on them, and then it's too late. Clean up grease, water, and other forms of spills as soon as you notice them. Cover icy and greasy spots with sand or dirt or other types of absorbent material.

PRACTICE WALKING SAFELY

If you cannot avoid walking on slippery or wet surfaces, practice walking safely across them. Don't try to run, jump, or slide across these slick surfaces. Instead, take slow, short steps with your toes pointed slightly outward. For additional balance, keep your hands at your sides (not in your pockets) to support your balance if you begin to fall. Remember that a freshly polished floor can also be very slick even though it doesn't usually appear hazardous.

USE NONSKID SHOES AND SURFACES WHEN AVAILABLE

If you work in an area that has slippery surfaces, such as a milking shed or concrete nursery floor, wear shoes that have slip-resistant soles. Ask your supervisor about the correct shoe for your job. Keep your shoes free from grease and oil. On large walkways, use mats or rough grade coverings to minimize falls.

MAINTAIN PROPER LIGHTING

Inadequate lighting can camouflage what is in your way, so replace light bulbs that don't work. When you enter a darkened room always turn on the light first, even if you only stay for a moment. Keep walkways clear of obstructions in areas that have poor lighting.

EXERCISE STAIR SAFETY

Stairs that are too steep, or not steep enough, can create the potential for trips and falls. Because it is very easy to lose your footing while climbing stairs, walk up and down stairs slowly and deliberately. Be cautious of worn or broken steps, and of insufficient lighting that may make it difficult to see properly. Never run up or down stairs, and avoid skipping steps. If you have to carry a load while climbing stairs, carry the load so it doesn't block your vision, and keep one hand free, if possible, to hold on to the railing.

INSPECT YOUR LADDER

Check your ladder to ensure the rungs are in good condition and that it has no cracks or broken parts. If the ladder is equipped with a spreader that locks the ladder frame into position, make sure it is secured before you begin to climb. Most importantly, check to make sure the ladder is the correct height for the task at hand; this will prevent you from reaching too far forward or upward, which could cause you to become off balance.

