

## Slip/Trip/Fall Prevention

By understanding how slips, trips, and falls happen, you can prevent painful injuries. Always clean up floor spills and loose debris immediately. Remember to report trip hazards, such as defective floor tiles, stair treads, and torn carpet to the Environmental Safety Office and the Physical Plant.

**SLIPS** are a loss of balance caused by too little friction between your feet and the surface you work or walk on. Slips can be caused by constantly wet surfaces, occasional spills, or weather related hazards such as ice or snow. Walking carelessly, ignoring occasional spills, and wearing shoes without adequate traction for the surface can cause painful slip injuries.

**Preventing Slips:** The most common causes of slips are walking on constantly wet surfaces, occasional spills, and weather hazards.

- Practice safe walking skills. If you must walk on wet surfaces, you can prevent slip injuries by taking a few simple precautions. Take short steps to keep your center of balance under you. Walk with your feet pointed outward slightly for a stable base of support.
- Clean spills up right away. Whenever you see a water, oil, or other substance spill, clean it up right away, or mark the spill by placing a sign, paper towels or wastebasket over or next to the spill and report it to the appropriate person for clean-up.
- Wear slip-resistant shoes.

**TRIPS** are loss of balance caused by interference between your forward motion and some object. Taking short cuts, leaving clutter in walkways, working under poor lighting, and walking on loose, uneven footing are common causes of trips.

**Preventing Trips:** Trips can occur whenever your foot strikes an object and you are moving with sufficient momentum to be thrown off balance.

- Be cautious. Take the most common path of travel available; it is apt to be the most free of trip hazards. When you are carrying loads make sure you can see above and around the articles you are carrying.
- Keep work areas well lit and free of clutter. Do not compromise the common path of travel with telephone or electrical cords, furniture, boxes, tools, machinery, or equipment.
- Always use the handrail when climbing or descending stairs.

**FALLS** from the same level - involve falling at the same level and result in a person falling to the floor or to the ground; examples include slips and trips. Slip and trips have a high frequency rate but a low injury severity rate. Falls from an elevation - involve falling from one

level to another. Examples include falling from a scaffold to the ground below. These types of falls have a relatively low frequency rate but a high injury severity rate.

**Preventing falls:** Make sure you have the right climbing equipment for the job. proper step stools, ladders, or industrial lift devices.

- Don't invent climbing equipment such as office chairs, boxes, or shelving. Use fall restraint devices as appropriate when using industrial lift devices.
- Follow ladder safety rules. Follow the 1-to-4 rule when using a ladder. The base of the ladder should be 1 foot from the support for every 4 feet of working ladder height (measure "working ladder height" from the ground to where the ladder hits its support). It is always good to have someone hold the base of the ladder on firm stable ground. Extend an extension ladder three beyond its contact with the building. Never use the top rung of any ladder. Inspect a ladder before using it.

### **SLIP RESISTANT SHOES**

- Neoprene soles, made with synthetic rubber, can be used on most work surfaces wet or dry. Not recommended for oily conditions.
- Crepe soles, rubber with a "crinkled" texture, are best used for rough concrete, either wet or dry. Not recommended for tile, smooth concrete, or wood surfaces.
- Leather soles can be used for ceramic tile, wood, and concrete surfaces that are wet and greasy. Not recommended for dry, smooth concrete or tile.
- Soft rubber soles can be used safely when working on most dry surfaces. They are not suggested for wet or greasy concrete.
- Hard rubber soles are best used for greasy concrete and wood. Not recommended for ceramic tile, dry or wet concrete, and wood.