

Slips, Trips, and Falls Safety Talk

Slips, trips, and falls are one of the leading causes of injuries and fatalities in the workplace. According to OSHA, slip, trip, and fall incidents cause 15% of all accidental deaths, and are second only to motor vehicle incidents as a cause of fatalities on the job. According to the 2006 Liberty Mutual Workplace Safety Index, the annual direct cost of disabling occupational injuries due to slips, trips and falls is estimated to exceed \$11 billion.

Common Slip, Trip, and Fall Incidents

Falls from elevation are often deadly or result in serious injury and may include falls from ladders, falls off of mobile equipment, falls from roofs or other elevated structures, etc. Slip incidents on slippery surfaces such as snow and ice are common in colder geographical areas in the U.S. Wet floors due to moisture or chemicals are common causes of slip incidents at work. Trips can be caused by a multitude of reasons including poor housekeeping, changes in elevation, improper footwear, etc.

Mitigations for Slip, Trip, and Fall incidents

- Always use fall prevention or protection for work over 4ft in general industry work and 6ft in the construction industry. Protect workers by using proper guarding of any holes or open windows and use guardrails to prevent falls. Where guardrails are not feasible, use proper fall protection. An example of proper fall protection is a full body harness and a self-retracting lanyard.
- Proper housekeeping is very important in preventing slip, trip, and falls incidents. Objects on the ground create a hazard for anyone walking or working in the area. Maintain clearly defined paths for walking in the work area. Have lay down yards for tools and equipment out of the way of employee foot traffic.
- Address any wet, slippery, or icy walking surfaces in your work area. Post signs of any hazardous surfaces until the situation is taken care of completely.
- When climbing up or down a portable or fixed ladder ensure that you use proper techniques such as using three points of contact and keeping your belt buckle within the sides of the ladder. Do not lean to reach objects- this can throw off your balance and you could fall.

Discussion points:

-Are there trip hazards due to improperly placed objects in your work area?

-Has anyone or a close family member of yours experienced a severe fall? How has it affected you/ them?

-What are other ways we can protect ourselves from slips, trips, and falls here at our site?

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