

Slips, Trips, & Falls



Same level falls, like slips and trips, make up 65% of fall injuries.

According to OSHA, slips, trips and falls constitute the majority of workplace accidents.

Most slip, trip and fall incidents are preventable with general precautions and safety measures.

Trying to catch your balance when you slip or trip can cause sprains and strains to muscles or joints and permanent back injuries, even if you don't fall.

Falls can cause serious injuries such as severe head injuries, back injuries, paralysis, broken bones, sprains and strains to muscles and even death.

Slips

A slip occurs when there is too little traction or friction between the shoe and walking surface.

Some causes of slips include:

- Wet walking surfaces
- Oil or other slippery material on the floor
- Environmental factors (ice, snow or mud)
- Materials such as scraps of wood or cloth on the floor
- Footwear with sole that are not appropriate for walking surfaces
- Poor lighting
- Personal factors (distractions, physical condition)

Trips

A trip occurs when a person's foot contacts an object or drops to a lower level unexpectedly and they are thrown off balance.

Some causes of trips include:

- Cords or hoses on the floor
- Uneven or damaged walking surfaces
- Debris or materials left in walking areas
- Poor lighting
- View forward obstructed by the materials carried by the person
- Personal factors (distractions, physical condition)
- Unanchored or uneven mats
- Loose or poor fitting footwear

Preventing slip, trip and fall incidents isn't just good practice, it's the law.

There are quite a few OSHA standards that apply to slip, trip and fall prevention. 29 CFR 1910 Subpart D covers walking-working surfaces for general industry. Because slips, trips and falls have numerous causal factors, various OSHA regulations may apply to different industries.

CFR 1910.22 "*General requirements*" specifies that:

- all areas of employment should be kept clean and sanitary
- the floors shall be kept clean and dry and where wet processes used,
- they shall be kept as dry as practical
- aisles and passageways shall be kept clear and in good repair
- permanent aisles and passageways shall be marked

Reducing the risk of *Slips, Trips, & Falls*

Here are some simple ways to reduce your risk of a slip, trip and fall incident:

- **Practice good housekeeping** – keep work areas clean and free of spills or debris, clean or draw attention to spills immediately and clean up or report any debris as soon as practical
- **Wear proper footwear** – anticipate environmental conditions (ice, snow, rain) and working environment, use footwear that reflects these conditions
- **Change light bulbs as needed** – report flickering or burnt out lights to ensure properly lit workspaces
- **Use a flashlight** – if you will be walking through or working in a dim environment, bring your own source of light to help you identify hazards
- **Be a cautious carrier** – don't carry a load that will obstruct your view while walking and make sure that you have a clear walkway to utilize before picking up large objects
- **Take your time** – if you anticipate slip or trip hazards, walk with caution and make wide turns at corners
- **Learn to walk** - adjust your walking speed and pace that is suitable for the walking surface, use rails or other stable objects to help you balance, walk with your feet pointed slightly out, keeping your center of balance under you and use your feet as probes to detect possible slips and trip hazards

Follow this simple rule to reduce slips, trips and falls at home and in the workplace:

**If you drop it, pick it up.
If you spill it, wipe it up.
Look where you are going,
and go where you are looking.**