

**SPECIAL
POINTS OF IN-
TEREST:**

- **What Causes a Slip, Trip or Fall**
- **Prevention**
- **What Do Slip and Trip Accidents Cost**
- **Guard Against Slips, Trips and Falls**
- **Tips to Prevent Trips and Falls**

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Hats ON for Safety

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Slips, Trips and Falls

Fall incidents account for over 20% of all lost-time injuries in the United States workplaces each year. When you think of workplace falls you think of dramatic falls from higher elevations. However, the majority of falls occur at the same level.

What Causes a Slip, Trip or Fall? There are three laws of science involved in a slip, trip or fall: friction, momentum, and gravity.

- **Friction** The resistance between two things, such as between your footwear and the walking surface. Friction is neces-



sary to maintain a grip on the walking surface. Remove the friction and you will slip.

- **Momentum** Speed and size make up the measure of momentum. In the workplace it means that large items moving at higher speeds will fall harder than the same item moving at a slower speed. When you run into an object in your path and are thrown off balance, your momentum (the speed at which you are moving) will cause you to trip.
- **Gravity** This is the force that pulls you to

the ground when you fall. The key point here is to keep your balance so you don't fall.

Gravity is the force that pulls you to the ground. Once a slip is in progress, the result is usually a fall.



Slips

Slips happen when there is too little friction or traction between footwear and walking surface.

- Wet or oily surfaces
- Spills
- Weather hazards
- Loose rugs or mats
- Flooring surfaces that don't have the same degree of traction.

Trips

Trips happen when your foot collides with an object causing you to lose your balance.

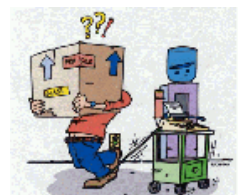
- Inadequate lighting
- Poor housekeeping
- Obstructed view

- Uncovered cords or cables
- Uneven walking surfaces

Prevention

Slips and trips result from unexpected change in the contact between the feet and walking surfaces.

To prevent slips and trips, emphasis needs to be put on housekeeping, maintenance of walking surfaces and proper footwear.



What do slip and trip accidents cost?

Slipping and tripping at work can prove more costly than you think!

Cost to the individual - incalculable

- Loss of income
- Pain from injury
- Reduced quality of life
- Worry and stress

Cost to employers

- Insured costs (injury, ill health, damage)
- Product, plant, equipment damage
- Production delays
- Overtime working, temporary labor and training
- Loss of expertise and experience
- Investigation time
- Clerical effort
- Fines, effect of accidents and loss of image

Guard Against Slips, Trips and Falls

- Clean up spills or barricade the area immediately.
- Never create unwarranted safety hazards. Keep walkways clear.
- Eliminate clutter through organization and planning.
- Beware of floor and ground surfaces where a change in traction might occur.
- Use handrails on stairs—those rails are PPE!



What are *YOU* worried about? Let us know safety topics that could help keep your workplace safe!

Tips to Prevent Slips, Trips and Falls

- Install slip-resistant flooring material such as textured, serrated or punched surfaces and steel grating. This type of floor surface is good for wet, oily, or dirty operations.
- Apply anti-slip solutions that contain gritty compounds on concrete, wood and metal floors.
- Provide absorbents to clean up spills where oily materials or corrosive liquids are spilled.
- Various slip-resistant products can be purchased in strips or rolls. These are designed for stair treads, ramps and hazardous surfaces.
- Provide personal fall protection when guardrail systems cannot eliminate the risk of falling.
- Place barriers around unprotected sides and edges. Install safety net systems to catch employees who fall.
- Use hole covers to guard floor openings of at least 2 inches.
- Pay (fully or in part) for slip-resistant shoes.
- Make sure hallways, stairs and work areas are properly lit.
- Repair or report stairs or handrails that are loose or broken.
- Don't use stairs or aisles as storage areas.
- Store goods safely.
- Use your initiative
- Clean up spills immediately.
- Mark slopes and changes of levels.
- Keep workstations clear of obstacles.
- Dispose of waste materials
- Avoid causing trailing cables.
- Remove any obstructions.
- Make sure flooring materials are level and secure.
- Think about visitors. What do they need to know? Do you need to do more to protect them?



Some information in this newsletter was taken from Penn State Environmental Health & Safety; J.J. Keller; www.hse.gov.uk