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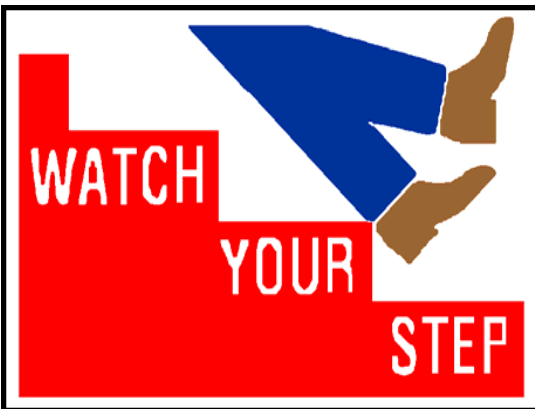
An Employee's Guide to Preventing Slip, Trip, and Fall Injuries



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In conclusion, slip, trip, and fall injuries are as easy to prevent as they are to occur. Prevent accidents both at work and at home by considering the four-step approach discussed in this handbook. If you have additional suggestions for safety, please contact your supervisor or safety coordinator immediately.



arch and ankle support. Here are a few helpful tips for selecting and maintaining footwear:

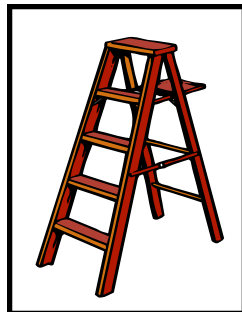
- ⇒ Follow your employer's safety rules regarding footwear
- ⇒ Keep the bottoms of your shoes clean
- ⇒ Use boots on snow or ice
- ⇒ Avoid dress shoes when appropriate
- ⇒ Match the sole of the shoe to the work surface and any other special needs

Walking Surface

We said earlier that the walking/working surface is the most identifiable during an accident investigation. The good news is that the composition, changes and condition of the surface can also be controlled. The key for an employer is to establish an effective safety inspection program that combines with the proactive efforts of all employees. Let's summarize the actions we can take to prevent slip, trip, and fall injuries.

A safety inspection is an integral part of the overall safety process. A general rule of thumb is that inspections of the immediate work area should be conducted daily, while a more formal approach should be conducted monthly. In either case, a system of documentation should be provided to log and follow-up with those items noted. Although conditions will vary according to the workplace, the following are general considerations:

- Housekeeping: debris or water accumulation
- Storage: aisles clear, ladders provided, avoid overhead objects
- Proper illumination
- Appropriate surface coating, mats, throw-rugs, runners, or stair treads
- Placement of electrical cords
- Equipment or furniture layout or design
- Exits marked and clearly visible



Whether the condition noted was informal or formal, an employer must demonstrate commitment through responsibility and accountability for accident prevention.

I. Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you and your employer with a "common sense" approach to a very serious problem. Similar to other safety concerns, it requires commitment and participation from everyone. Your employer has demonstrated their role and responsibility for accident prevention by distributing this handbook to you. Now, you must adopt an active role to ensure a successful safety program. You are encouraged to read this handbook and incorporate as many of its guidelines as possible into your workplace. Our goal is to prevent future slip, trip, and fall accidents from happening to you and your co-workers. Many of these principles can also be used at home to protect both you and your family from accidents.

Every year 4,000 deaths result from slip, trip, and fall accidents. This equates to all passengers on a jumbo jet dying from a crash every month. There are 6 - 10 million injuries reported annually in the United States representing 20% of all injuries. The Bureau of National Statistics reports 1.6 deaths per 100,000 people from slip, trip, and fall incidents and these are the second leading cause of death. Lastly, did you know that the average person takes over 18,000 steps per day? Walking can be a very simple task but evidently, has contributed to much death, pain, suffering, and wasted dollars.

All of these statistics should sound somewhat alarming and hopefully, will prepare you for the message in this handbook. The goals and objectives of the "*Employee's Guide to Preventing Slip, Trip, and Fall Injuries*" Handbook is to help you learn the following;

- Understand how slip, trip, and falls can occur
- Raise your awareness of your surroundings
- Prevent future accidents from occurring

II. Understanding How Slip, Trip, and Fall Accidents Occur

Unfortunately, slipping, tripping, and falling has become as common as walking. If you have not already experienced one of these accidents, you probably know someone who has. To solve any problem, we must begin by understanding the basic elements. So, let's start by reviewing a few terms and definitions:

- **Slip:** a loss of balance caused by too little friction between your feet and a surface.
- **Trip:** a loss of balance caused by interference of your forward motion by an object.
- **Fall:** a movement too far off your center of balance.
- **Friction:** the resistance between moving objects such as your shoes and the surface you are walking on.
- **Momentum:** the quantity of motion affected by speed and size.
- **Gravity:** the force that allows a large body to pull smaller bodies toward itself.
- **Center of Balance:** the point where weight is evenly distributed.
- **Co-efficient of friction (COE):** describes the amount of friction provided by the surface.
- **Surface Composition, Condition, & Changes:** type of material that makes up the floor surface, any condition noted at a time of a survey, or any changes from one condition to another.
- **Obstacle:** anything that enters into your path.
- **Illumination:** intensity of light.
- **Footwear:** shoes or boots.
- **Floor Hole:** opening measuring less than 12 inches but more than 1 inch.



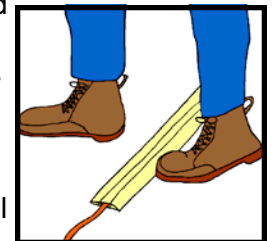
- **Floor Opening:** opening measuring 12 inches or more.
- **Platform:** an elevated work or walk surface.
- **Stairs:** more than three steps.
- **Tread:** horizontal part of a step.
- **Riser:** vertical part of a step.

- Take short steps and slow down
- Point feet slightly outward as you walk
- Make wide turns at corners
- Pay attention to the surface and any changes to it
- Wear slip-resistant shoes when appropriate
- Clean up spills immediately or mark a spill
- Keep your hands free for balance and out of your pockets
- Go at a steady pace, don't race down halls or around corners
- Keep soles of footwear clean
- Take the pathway provided
- Make sure you can see over the load you are carrying
- Turn on lights, replace lightbulbs, repair fixtures or cords
- Slow down when light is limited
- Keep area clean and free of clutter
- Fix loose carpeting or stair treads
- Fasten throw rugs, mats or runners, or use slip-resistant materials
- Never use stairs for temporary storage
- Use the appropriate climbing equipment
- Keep your arms and legs close to the center of balance
- Follow the 4:1 rule when using a ladder
- Have someone support the base of the ladder when possible
- Think about unusual situations before doing a job
- Always make sure you have the right equipment
- Ask for help when needed
- Use fall restraint devices where appropriate
- Don't jump from tailgates or cabs of trucks
- Use a 3-point step-off from vehicles
- Always close file cabinets
- Store personal items out of aiseways and office areas
- Keep all chair legs on the floor at all times

Footwear

A simple way to prevent slip, trip, and fall injuries is by selecting the correct footwear.

The correct footwear should increase the friction between your shoe sole and walking surface; as well as provide you with better





Safety communication can take the form of posters, payroll stuffers, employee safety meetings, or safety committee agenda items. Training programs can also include additional material that can be periodically reviewed by your supervisor.

The important key here is to be alert to possible hazards and correct those within your scope. Others should be reported to your supervisor or documented on an inspection checklist for further action by management. In addition, there should always be follow-up to any reported hazard.

Unfortunately, accidents happen, and we should take the opportunity to learn from them and improve our safety records. Through thorough investigation and review, we can learn what went wrong and how to prevent it from reoccurring. It is the supervisors responsibility to conduct the investigation within the assigned time frame and complete the necessary forms for further review. This process should be "fact finding" not "fault finding" and a positive experience for all employees.

Thorough investigation should include the identification of an unsafe condition and its history. This means asking questions like *why is the water on the floor, who allowed it to be there, how did it get there,* and most importantly, *how it could have been prevented.* If these efforts are not taken seriously, your accidents will continue and become more severe. As an employee, it is your responsibility to report all accidents to your supervisor immediately and cooperate fully in any resulting investigation.

Activity

Next, we should examine how and what we are doing at work and at home. Specific attention should be given to accessing elevated areas. We should always use the appropriate step ladder or stool in these situations. The basic safety guidelines we should always try to follow include:

- **Standard Railing** - consist of top rail, midrail, and post with a vertical height of 42".
- **Standard Toeboard** - minimum of 4" in vertical height above floor level.

Although not a new problem, slip, trip, and fall injuries may require a new solution. We must consider all elements of a potential slip, trip, and fall and use a four step approach. These accidents appear to involve a combination of employee, activity, footwear, and finally, the walking surface. We must realize the entire environment and our role to identify and prevent the accident.

III. Raising Awareness of Your Surroundings

Now that we are thinking about slip, trip, and falls and how they can occur, let's apply this information to your surroundings. We must be more aware of possible slip, trip, and fall hazards so we can avoid or control them. Sadly, we are the most important factor in a slip, trip, and fall accident.

Employee

Although we often blame our surroundings and contributing factors for an accident, statistics show that we are responsible for 90% of all workplace accidents. If we are going to prevent injuries, we have to begin by thinking about our actions. Can you list some possible actions which contribute to this type of accident?

<u>SLIP</u>	<u>TRIP</u>	<u>FALL</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Activity

Secondly, there are some tasks, jobs, or activities that may either directly or indirectly contribute to a slip, trip, and fall accident. Many of these can even be thought of as routine so we become complacent. Some are seasonal or infrequently done which contribute to our forgetfulness. And yet others may be jobs we are not trained for - yet attempt to do. Below, name some of these:

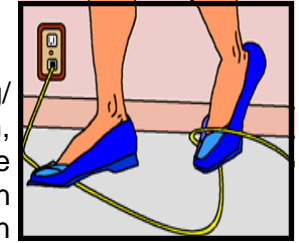
<u>ROUTINE TASK</u>	<u>SEASONAL OR INFRE-QUENTLY PERFORMED</u>	<u>NOT TRAINED TO PERFORM</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

These answers should reflect your specific job duties or home activities.

Footwear

Although everyone must wear shoes, we don't always select the right ones for the job or environment. First, you must follow any recommendations or requirements your employer may have established based upon your job duties. If this isn't the case, you must be aware of your surroundings and select the appropriate footwear. Below, list work or walking surfaces in your workplace where a slip-resistant or special shoe may be required:

Walking Surfaces



Lastly, we must consider the walking/working surface. The composition, condition and changes of the floor surface are often the most identifiable in an accident investigation process. When considering walking surfaces, we must ask ourselves two questions:

- (1) Why wasn't it visible before the accident?
- (2) How did it get there or why was it allowed to stay that way?

It is important that the answers to both of these questions be part of a thorough accident investigation. And sadly, if you would have known the information, the accident probably would not have happened. If we start to answer either of these questions now, we may prevent future accidents from occurring.

IV. Prevention of Future Accidents

The final section of this handbook is the most vital to you and the prevention of future accidents to yourself, your co-workers and your family. You are encouraged to utilize the four step approach: employee, activity, footwear and floor surface in terms of both awareness and prevention. Let's review common sense practices that you can do to prevent future slip, trip, and fall accidents.

Employee

A critical element of any safety program is communication. Communication is most beneficial when attempting to prevent slip, trip, and fall accidents. Since most of these accidents occur during the simple task of walking, it is difficult to see the potential hazard. Constant reminders and pro-active information can serve to focus employees on these possible hazards and tips for prevention.