Safety Minute

Preventing Slips, Trips & Falls

Montana State Fund

Stop the Fall

Slips, trips, and falls are among the leading causes of workplace injuries across various industries. Each year, thousands of disabling injuries and even fatalities result from these incidents. By utilizing the Stop the Fall model, we can identify the three primary factors that contribute to slips, trips, and falls. Understanding these factors enables all of us to play our part in preventing these injuries.

Factors

Footwear | Surfaces | Actions



Footwear

Proper footwear selection is essential, no matter where you work or what you do. Wearing the wrong shoes can increase your risk of injury. Here are some simple ways to protect yourself from slips, trips, and falls.

First, always ensure that you are wearing the appropriate shoes for your job. If you work in environments with wet or slippery floors, non-slip soles are necessary. Some job sites may require steel-toe boots for added protection. However, if you are working around live electricity, exposed metal toe caps can conduct electricity, so ceramic toe boots may be a safer option.

Weather conditions also play a significant role in footwear choice. During icy or snowy conditions, everyday shoes may not provide enough traction. In such cases, consider using traction devices like crampons or ice cleats to enhance grip.

It's also important to regularly inspect your shoes for wear and tear. Worn-out shoes can lose traction and increase the risk of accidents. If the worn area is larger than two pennies, it's time to replace your shoes. Additionally, check your laces to ensure they are tied properly, so you don't accidentally trip over them.

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Actions

There are many simple actions you can take to prevent slips, trips, and falls at home and in the workplace.

Adjusting your stride can help you stay safe in various weather and environmental conditions. Use a normal stride on dry surfaces but shorten your stride on wet or snowy ground. If the surface is slippery or icy, walk like a penguin by taking shorter steps and keeping your arms extended for balance. When there's debris in your walkway, use a shorter stride for better stability.

When walking through parking lots or on other surfaces, be cautious of any uneven areas, such as large cracks in concrete, curbs, or potholes. Keep walkways clear of debris and adjust your walking pace according to the weather conditions. In snowy or icy conditions, slow down and take shorter strides to maintain stability.

In certain situations, such as walking on a slope or stepping over or ducking under obstacles, turn sideways for better balance.

Good housekeeping practices are also essential for slip, trip, and fall prevention. Keep your workspace organized and tidy by putting things away as you work. Ensure that all cords are secured, clean up any spills immediately, and pick up debris and trash. Dispose of waste properly and make sure every item has a designated place.

Standard stride



Safer, shorter stride when hazards are present



Safest stride when walking on slippery surfaces



Slips, trips, and falls can happen in any workplace—and, unfortunately, they happen often. Follow this three-part strategy to identify common hazards and how to prevent them.