

Avoiding Slips and Falls

A janitorial employee was scrubbing the steps and floors with water and a cleaning agent. An observant worker realized that soon, dozens of employees would be going down these steps for their lunch break. This person then took the proper action to avert this potentially dangerous situation and set up a wet floor sign.

Do Your Safety Part

Slips and falls account for millions of work-related injuries every year, and an unguarded wet floor is just one of the many possible causes. It is important to spot unsafe conditions that could lead to slips and falls, and do what you can to prevent them.

There are various ways to suffer slips and falls while working. You can slip and lose your balance, you can trip over objects left improperly in your walkway, or you can simply fall from an elevated position to the ground. To avoid slips and falls, be on the lookout for foreign substances on the floor, such as:

- **Deposits of Water**
- **Food**
- **Grease or Oil**
- **Sawdust**
- **Soap**
- **Other Manufacturing Debris**

Even small quantities are enough to make you fall.

Good Housekeeping Counts

When entering a building from outside or from debris areas, clean your footwear thoroughly. Snowy and rainy weather requires a doormat at each entrance to allow for complete wiping of shoes. Avoid running, walk safely and do not change directions too sharply.

Beware of tripping hazards. Trash, unused materials or any object left in aisles designed for pedestrian traffic invites falls. Extension cords, tools, carts and other items should be removed or properly barricaded off. If equipment or supplies are left in walkways, report it so the proper personnel can remove it. Also, keep passageways clean of debris by using trash barrels and recycling bins.

Practice Prevention

Walk in designated walking areas. Short cuts through machine or other manufacturing areas can cause accidents. Concentrate on where you are going – horseplay and inattention leaves you vulnerable to unsafe conditions. Hold on to handrails when using stairs or ramps. They are there to protect you should a fall occur. If you're carrying a heavy load that hampers your ability to properly ascend or descend stairs, use the elevator or find help.

The worst falls are from elevated positions such as ladders, and can result in serious injury or death. Learn and practice ladder safety and the proper use of scaffolding. For example, when climbing, use a ladder of proper length that is in good condition. Keep it placed on a firm surface. Do not climb a ladder placed on machinery, crates, stock or boxes. Keep the ladder's base one foot away from the wall for every four feet of height. Don't over-reach. Always have control of your balance when working from a ladder. Never climb a ladder with your hands full, and always transport tools in their proper carrying devices.

Slips and falls occur every day. The extent of injuries and their recurrence can be minimized through proper safety knowledge, good housekeeping and practicing prevention.