

Safety Newsletter

April, 2014

This Month's Topic: Slips, Trips, and Falls

People may inherently consider slips, trips and falls to be funny - so long as it is clear that no-one is hurt. This inherent perception could be a serious issue in getting people to take slips, trips and falls seriously. It may be necessary to remind people of the potential gravity of workplace slips, trips and falls (STF).

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, slips, trips and falls make up the majority of general industry accidents, which account for:

- 15 percent of all accidental deaths per year, the second-leading cause behind motor vehicles
- About 25 percent of all reported injury claims per fiscal year
- More than 95 million lost work days per year – about 65 percent of all work days lost

Slips, trips & falls can happen anywhere in your operation. There are many situations that may cause slips, trips, and falls, such as ice, wet spots, grease, polished floors, loose flooring or carpeting, uneven walking surfaces, clutter, electrical cords, open desk drawers and filing cabinets. Loose, irregular surfaces such as gravel, shifting floor tiles, and uneven sidewalks, can make it difficult to maintain your footing.

Most STF incidents are preventable with general precautions and safety measures.

Possible Solutions

- Design of workplace & work processes: design workplace & processes to prevent potential exposures to slip & trip hazards
- Good housekeeping: maintain clear, tidy work areas free of clutter
- Safe walking practices: follow safe walking practices & routes
- Wearing proper footwear: wear proper footwear with good traction
- Keep floors clean and dry. In addition to being a slip hazard, continually wet surfaces promote the growth of mold, fungi, and bacteria that can cause infections.
- Provide warning signs for wet floor areas.
- Where wet processes are used, maintain drainage and provide false floors, platforms, mats, or other dry standing places where practicable, or provide appropriate waterproof footwear.
- Keep aisles and passageways clear and in good repair, with no obstruction across or in aisles that could create a hazard. Provide floor plugs for equipment, so power cords need not run across pathways.
- Keep exits free from obstruction. Access to exits must remain clear of obstructions at all times.

Take the time to remove slip, trip and fall hazards to keep your working environment safe. It could prevent someone from experiencing a more serious injury down the line.

Alisto Engineering 2014 Safety Statistics

Motor Vehicle Accidents/ Total Miles Driven (01/01/14 – 02/28/14)	Lost Work Days/ Total Work Days (01/01/14 – 02/28/14)	Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (01/01/14 – 02/28/14)
0/ 41,418 miles	0 days*/ 39 days	0*

** From Edgewood Partners Insurance Center*

“Take a walk around. It's better to know a hazard is there by sight ... than by contact.”

Mark Young, P.E.
Lead Civil Engineer,
Alisto Engineering Group, Inc.

Definitions

Slip - Too little friction or traction between feet (footwear) & walking/working surface, resulting in loss of balance



Trip - Foot or lower leg hits object & upper body continues moving, resulting in loss of balance; stepping down to lower surface & losing balance



Fall - Occurs when too far off center of balance



Human Factors Increasing Risk of STFs - Behavior

- * Carrying or moving cumbersome objects or simply too many objects at one time
- * Not paying attention to surroundings or walking distracted
- * Taking unapproved shortcuts
- * Being in a hurry and rushing

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Construction Safety & Fall Protection

Working at Heights

- Employees shall use approved harnesses and lanyards, approved ropes/cables, life lines, temporary guard railings, or other adequate protection as required when working in elevated positions, such as rope access, work at heights greater than 6 feet above ground service (including trenches or excavations over 6 feet deep), and erecting and dismantling scaffold.
- All fall protection equipment including but limited to primary positioning straps and secondary positioning straps (flip lines) must be inspected each day before use to determine that they are safe. Lineman positioning straps shall not be used when the red safety marker strip is exposed. In addition, all fall protection equipment shall be inspected and documented twice a year by a competent person.
- Any fall protection equipment that fails inspection must be removed from service and destroyed.
- Any job plan that involves that involves working at heights must include a rescue plan.
- Tools and other materials shall not be left lying in elevated work areas unless prevented from falling.



Scaffolds and Falsework

- No employee, material and equipment shall be supported by a tree, pole, structure, scaffold, ladder, walkway, or other elevated structure, crane, or derrick, etc., without it first being determined that such support is adequately strong and properly secured.
- Scaffolding shall be of sufficient strength and rigidity to support four times its intended load (the weight of the workers and material).
- Erection and dismantling of scaffolding and false worked shall be performed under the supervision and direction of a scaffold qualified person.
- Suspended scaffolds that are in service shall be inspected daily by a scaffold qualified person and tested as necessary in order to provide proper maintenance.

Ladders

- Employees shall place ladders on a base that is solid, even, and free of water, grease or other slip hazard.
- When using straight or extension ladders, extend at least 36 inches (3 ft.) above the landing (overlap depends on ladder length). If this is not practical, grab rails that provide a secure grip for an employee moving to or from the point of access shall be installed.

Causes of Slips, Trips, and Falls

- * Wet or greasy floors
- * Dry floors with wood dust or powder
- * Uneven walking surfaces
- * Polished or freshly waxed floors
- * Loose flooring, carpeting or mats
- * Transition from one floor type to another
- * Missing or uneven floor tiles and bricks
- * Damaged or irregular steps; no handrails
- * Sloped walking surfaces
- * Shoes with wet, muddy, greasy or oily soles
- * Clutter
- * Electrical cords or cables
- * Open desk or file cabinet drawers
- * Damaged ladder steps
- * Ramps and gang planks without skid-resistant surfaces
- * Metal surfaces – dock plates, construction plates
- * Weather hazards – rain, sleet, ice, snow, hail, frost
- * Wet leaves or pine needles

References:

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