



Fall Protection and Training

Slips, Trips and Falls Prevention

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How Do Slips, Trips and Falls Occur?

Slips, trips, and falls occur when there is too little friction or traction on a walking surface, when a foot or lower leg hits an object while the rest of the body continues to move, or when the center of balance is lost resulting in a descent to the floor, against an object or to a surface at a lower level than the original surface.¹ These incidents are often caused by slippery, irregular or uneven surfaces, obstacles on the floor or uncovered/unidentified hazard areas.

Hazards relating to slips, trips and falls are frequently top offenders on OSHA's top 10 violation lists. In 2018 alone, slips, trips, and falls were tied to three of the top ten violations, and two of the top three.

These violations included hazards relating to fall protection (#1), scaffolding (#3), and ladders (#6).²

OSHA Standards that Help Prevent Slips, Trips and Falls

OSHA 29 CFR 1910.36 & 37 *Means of Egress*

This standard supports the safety of exit routes. Some of the key elements that apply to slips, trips and fall in this standard include:

- The outdoor exit route must have guardrails to protect unenclosed sides if a fall hazard exists
- The outdoor exit route must be reasonably straight and have smooth, solid, substantially level walkways
- The outdoor exit route must be covered if snow or ice is likely to accumulate along the route, unless the employer can demonstrate that any snow or ice accumulation will be removed before it presents a slipping hazard

OSHA 29 CFR 1910.22 and 1910 Subpart D *Walking-Working Surface*

This standard supports worker safety by keeping workplaces clean and safe from hazards, including:

- Keeping facilities clean, orderly and dry
- Providing draining, platforms, mats or other dry standing places when wet processes are used
- Keeping floors and workplaces free from protruding nails, splinters, holes and loose boards
- Keeping aisles clear and in good repair
- Permanently marking aisles and passageways
- Using covers and guardrails to protect workers from open pits, tanks, vats, etc.
- Marking loads with approved plates and maintaining safe load weights
- Safety requirements for scaffolding and ladders construction and use

Read more: Preventing Slips and Falls: How Brady SPC Soaks Up Shop-Floor Hazards

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You wouldn't be here if you didn't think slips, trips, and falls prevention was important. You also should know by now the implications of not taking the right steps to complying with OSHA's Walking-Working Surfaces standard and the potential dangers associated to non-compliance. Now, let's outline each step that you can take to prevent slips, trips and falls hazards.

1. Assess Your Workplace
2. Mark Aisles and Passageways
3. Provide Traction on Slippery Surfaces
4. Improve Stair Safety
5. Mark Emergency Evacuation Routes
6. Post Safety Signs and Labels
7. Warn of Temporary Hazards
8. Inspect Scaffolds and Ladders
9. Control and Clean Oil and Spills
10. Train Employees

Building A Response Plan

Despite our best efforts, accidents sometimes happen. In the event that a slip, trip or fall does occur at your workplace, you need a plan that allows everyone to act quickly and effectively. When you're creating a response plan here are a few guidelines to keep in mind:

1. Provide assistance

This may sound like a given, but many times in the heat of the moment, those who immediately respond to an emergency may not know what to do. Make sure there is a clear and easy way to provide first aid or call for emergency medical assistance.

2. Report the incident

The appropriate personnel within your workplace need to have a system in place to record slips, trips, and fall incidents. Furthermore, these incident reports should be kept to review common incident areas and provided to your insurance company.

3. Find ways to avoid the incident in the future

This is when you can identify area of training, different products or signage needs, and housekeeping practices that should be used to ensure employee safety and compliance to OSHA standards in the future.

Sources:

¹ OSHA. (2007). Slips, Trips & Falls Identification & Prevention. Retrieved from: <https://www.osha.gov/harwoodgrants/grantmaterials/fy2006/46eo-ht10>

² OSHA. (2018). Top 10 Most Frequently Cited Standards. Retrieved from: https://www.osha.gov/Top_Ten_Standards.html

³ National Safety Council. (2011). Slips, Trips and Falls Fact Sheet. Retrieved from: http://www.nsc.org/NSCDocuments_Advocacy/Fact%20Sheets/Slips-Trips-and-Falls.pdf

⁴ OSHA. (2007). Slips, Trips & Falls Identification & Prevention.

⁵ OSHA. (2007). Slips, Trips & Falls Identification & Prevention.

⁶ Smith, S. (2013, July 15). The High Costs of Slips, Trips and Falls. Retrieved from EHS Today.

⁷ Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2014). Nonfatal Occupational Injuries and Illnesses Requiring Days Away from Work, 2013. Retrieved from BLS: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/osh2.pdf>

⁸ National Floor Safety Institute. (2015). Quick Facts. Retrieved from NFSI.org: <https://nfsi.org/nfsi-research/quick-facts/>

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Browse sorbents from Brady SPC on MSCDirect.com to help prevent slips, trips and falls in your facility.

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