

# TAKE 5 Preventing Slips, Trips, & Falls

A 5-Minute Safety Training Aid

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Year-after-year slips, trips, and falls remain a leading cause of workplace injuries and fatalities. In 2020, 15% of all work-related deaths in Texas were caused by these incidents.<sup>1</sup> Fortunately, accidents such as these are 100% preventable.



## Falls

Falls account for about 8.9 million visits to emergency rooms each year.<sup>2</sup> They

occur in the workplace most often when someone moves too far off their center of balance or overreaches while on a ladder, roof, or scaffolding. These tips can help workers avoid falls.



- Find ways to complete most of the work needed on the ground without the use of ladders.
- Provide workers with alternatives to ladders, such as aerial lifts or supported scaffolds.
- Make sure ladders and scaffolding are thoroughly inspected, free of defects, have safety accessories, and are well matched to a worker's weight, task, and location.
- Always place ladders on a firm surface. Never climb a ladder placed on machinery, crates, or boxes.
- Keep a ladder's base 1 foot away from the wall for every 4 feet of ladder height.
- Never climb ladders when carrying tools or other items. Instead, use a pouch or tool belt to secure all items.
- Assemble scaffolds according to the manufacturer's specifications.

<sup>1</sup> Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation, "2020 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries," p. 7. Website: <https://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/sis/documents/2020fatalrpt.pdf>. Accessed March 22, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Occupational Safety and Health Administration, "Slips, Trips, and Falls," p. 3. Website: [https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/2018-12/fy16\\_sh-29672-sh6\\_SlipsTripsFallsHandoutforSafetyCommitteeMeetings.pdf](https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/2018-12/fy16_sh-29672-sh6_SlipsTripsFallsHandoutforSafetyCommitteeMeetings.pdf). Accessed March 22, 2022.

- Keep standing planks level and clean.
- Use toeboards to prevent tools from falling and others from slipping.
- Do not jump off landings or loading docks. Use the stairs.
- Repair or replace stairs or handrails that are loose or broken.
- Keep passageways and aisles clear of clutter and well lit.



Workplace trips occur whenever an employee's foot hits an object when they are moving with enough speed to be thrown off balance. Trips are more likely to happen when workers are in a hurry and do not pay attention to where they are going. These tips can prevent trip hazards.

- Use safe lifting techniques.
- Ask for help or use an elevator when a load is too heavy or bulky to safely go up and down stairs.
- Store materials and supplies in the appropriate storage areas to keep the workplace clean and tidy.
- Arrange furniture and equipment so as not to interfere with walkways or pedestrian traffic in the area. Short cuts through machine areas invite accidents so stay in the proper aisles and walkways.
- Properly maintain walking areas and keep them well lit. Watch for items that can become tripping hazards, such as trash, unused materials, extension cords, tools, and carts left in aisles and walkways. Alert a supervisor regarding possible maintenance-related issues.



Workplace slips are often caused by wet surfaces, spills, or weather hazards like ice or snow. They are more likely to occur when employees hurry or run, wear the wrong kind of shoes, or do not pay attention to where they are walking. These tips can help workers avoid slips.

- Clean off shoes and boots on a doormat when entering a building.
- Practice safe walking skills. Take short steps on slippery surfaces with feet pointing slightly outward to maintain balance. Avoid sharp changes in direction.
- Be alert for deposits of water, food, grease, oil, sawdust,

soap, or other debris on the floor. Clean up or report spills right away. Even minor spills can become dangerous.

- Do not let grease build up in the workplace.
- Use extra care on smooth surfaces such as newly waxed floors.
- Take advantage of handrails, stairs, and ramps. They are there to prevent injuries.
- Wear shoes with non-slip soles.



## Employee Training

Train employees to recognize and avoid unsafe conditions.

- Review [OSHA 1910.22 Walking/Working Surfaces](#) and explain to all employees at orientation and periodically throughout the year what is expected of them to prevent accidents.
- Use this publication to explain the hazards of slips, trips, and falls, and ways employees can protect themselves.
- Discuss how the right shoe can prevent slips, trips, and falls, and areas in the workplace that might create hazards.
- Discuss any company program for shoe purchase or reimbursement.

A slip, trip, or fall can end in death or disability in a split second, but these simple precautions can keep employees safe and injury-free.



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