ESSENTIAL 29: Slips, Trips and Falls

Key Takeaways:
– Learning about the physical and behavioral hazards that can lead to slips, trips, and falls.
– Understanding the different ways both you and your employer are responsible for providing safe work spaces.
– Recognizing proper housekeeping practices and personal behaviors that can eliminate/prevent slip, trip, and fall hazards.
– Learning how to fall properly to avoid serious injury and how to respond to a fall injury.

Course Description
This course on slips, trips, and falls reinforces good behaviors for workers on how and where to avoid areas where these hazards reside.

Recently, the Congressional Accountability Office of Compliance released statistics that indicate falls are the private industry's third leading cause of workplace fatalities. Nearly 600 workers die from a fatal slip, trip, or fall, annually.

In fact, most falls occur on flat surfaces like plant floors. Often, they happen because of slippery areas, improperly stored items, foreign objects, and floor surface issues.

Documenting hazards you see in and around the workplace and following good housekeeping practices are the best defenses from a serious fall. Good housekeeping means that when a worker encounters a spill, or finds debris in a walkway, they first recognize the impact this material might have for colleagues negotiating the path, and then act immediately to clear the hazard. Typically, good housekeeping will mean keeping all areas of employment clean, orderly, and sanitary, including storerooms, service rooms, passageways, and bathrooms. It is easy to understand the idea when you think of picking up trash on the floors at home or children's toys left out on a staircase.

In part with good housekeeping practices, safety professionals need to be able to answer “yes” to these questions:
– Does every stairway and stairwell have smooth, continuous handrails and slip-resistant stair surfaces?
– Is adequate lighting present in work areas and passageways?
– Proper drainage for wet processes and dry places to stand exist where practical?
– Do all exposed walking surfaces supply sufficient texture or treatment for safe traction?