Preventing Injuries From Slips, Trips and Falls Meeting Kit

COMMON SLIPS, TRIPS, AND FALLS INCIDENTS

Slips, trips, and falls are one of the leading causes of injuries and fatalities in the workplace. According to OSHA, slip, trip, and fall incidents cause 15% of all accidental deaths, and are second only to motor vehicle incidents as a cause of fatalities on the job.

SLIPS, TRIPS/FALLS DEFINITIONS

Slips happen when there’s not enough friction or traction between your feet (shoes) and the surface you’re walking or working on.

Trips happen when your foot or lower leg hits an object and your upper body keeps on going, causing you to lose balance.

Falls happen when you slip, or trip and you’re thrown too far off balance.

Falls are among the leading causes of death in the workplace and a fall at work can put you out of commission. Weeks in pain, months in a cast or years in a wheelchair can be the result of a simple slip, trip or fall. Even a fall from the same level – instead of a fall from a height – can cause a fatal or crippling injury.

GUIDELINES FOR PREVENTION

Create Good Housekeeping Practices. There are three steps to get started

- **Plan ahead–** Know what needs to be done, who’s going to do it and what the particular work area should look like when you

are done.
- **Assign responsibilities**– It may be necessary to assign a specific person or group of workers to clean up.
- **Implement a program**– Establish housekeeping procedures as a part of the daily routine.

Reduce Wet or Slippery Surfaces

- Keep parking lots and sidewalks clean and in good repair condition.
- When snow and ice are present, remove or treat these elements. In some extreme cases, it may be necessary to suspend use of the area.
- Use adhesive striping material or anti-skid paint whenever possible.
- Use moisture-absorbent mats with beveled edges in entrance areas. Make sure they have backing material that will not slide on the floor.
- Display “Wet Floor” signs as needed.
- Use anti-skid adhesive tape in troublesome areas.
- Clean up spills immediately. Create a procedure for taking the appropriate action when someone causes or comes across a food or drink spill.

Avoid Creating Obstacles in Aisles and Walkways

Injuries can also result in trips caused by obstacles, clutter, materials and equipment in aisles, corridors, entranceways and stairwells. Proper housekeeping in work and traffic areas is still the most effective control measure in avoiding these types of hazards.

- Keep all work areas, passageways, storerooms and service areas clean and orderly.
- Avoid stringing cords, cables or air hoses across hallways or in any designated aisle.
- In office areas, avoid leaving boxes, files or briefcases in the aisles.
- Encourage safe work practices such as closing file cabinet drawers after use and picking up loose items from the floor.

- Conduct periodic inspections for slip and trip hazards.

Create and Maintain Proper Lighting

- Use proper illumination in walkways, staircases, ramps, hallways, basements, construction areas and dock areas.
- Keep work areas well lit and clean.
- Upon entering a darkened room, always turn on the light first.
- Keep poorly lit walkways clear of clutter and obstructions.
- Keep areas around light switches clear and accessible.
- Repair fixtures, switches and cords immediately if they malfunction.

Wear Proper Shoes

The shoes we wear can play a big part in preventing falls. The slickness of the soles and the type of heels worn need to be evaluated to avoid slips, trips and falls. Whenever a fall-related injury is investigated, the footwear needs to be evaluated to see if it contributed to the incident.

Control Individual Behavior

This condition is the toughest to control. It is human nature to let our guard down for two seconds and be distracted by random thoughts or doing multiple activities. Taking shortcuts, not watching where one is going, using a cell phone, carrying materials which obstructs the vision, wearing sunglasses in low-light areas, not using designated walkways and speed are common elements in many on-the-job injuries.

FINAL WORD

Slips, Trips, and Falls are a leading causes of workplace injury and death. They also cause a great deal of pain and suffering. Take slip, trip and fall hazards seriously, and don’t let them trip you up.