



IMCOM Safety Gram



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Don't Fall for Slipping and Tripping Hazards

Falls always have an element of surprise. The surprise factor is what makes falls a standard comedy routine. But falls aren't at all fun when they are real. Falls are one of the leading causes of workplace injury and death. And these aren't necessarily falls from heights such as ladders or construction scaffolds. Most are falls from the same level, caused by slipping or tripping. Falls can happen anytime and anywhere, but with winter just around the corner, it is time to also make sure we are prepared to prevent slips on ice and snow.



Here are some reminders about preventing falls:

- ◆ Keep obstructions out of walkways. These items are common causes of tripping accidents - stored materials, equipment, cables, cords, hoses, scrap, and trash.
- ◆ Keep doors and drawers of cabinets and workbenches closed.
- ◆ Clean up any spills promptly. If this is not possible, make sure there is a barricade and sign.
- ◆ Floor coverings such as carpets, mats, and tiles should be secured to prevent tripping hazards. Report any problems you find.
- ◆ Stay under the speed limit when you are walking. Don't run in your work area.
- ◆ Make sure your footwear won't trip you up. It should fit well and have low heels. Keep your shoelaces tied. The tread should be adequate for travelling safely on slippery surfaces. Keep your shoes in good repair.
- ◆ If you are carrying an item, be sure you can see over it or around it. This is especially important on stairways.
- ◆ If you slip or trip - even if you are not injured - take a moment to figure out the cause. Correct or report any hazards such as wet floors or obstacles in traffic areas.

Falls are a hazard at work any time of the year. But winter weather adds a greater element of danger:

- ◆ Report any hazardous conditions such as ice on a sidewalk or water in an entry area. It may not be your job to shovel snow or mop up spills, but it is certainly your responsibility to report hazards so they can be corrected before someone is injured.
- ◆ Outdoor walkways and steps should be kept free of ice, snow, mud, and wet leaves.
- ◆ Entrances and interior traffic areas should also be kept free of water and ice. There should be mats at the doorways to remove snow, water, and mud from footwear.
- ◆ Extra measures should be taken to ensure safe footing on sloped floor surfaces, such as ramps.
- ◆ When walking on slippery surfaces go slowly and take small steps.
 - ◆ Wear shoes or boots with non-slip soles. Special footwear with cleats is available for especially slippery conditions.
 - ◆ Watch your footing as you get in or out of vehicles. When climbing in or out of equipment cabs, keep a firm grip on the handholds and watch out for ice on the footholds, and mud or ice on your shoes.
 - ◆ Winter weather calls for extra caution when working at heights. Make sure surfaces such as ladder rungs and scaffold decks are free of ice and snow.

Falls aren't funny. They cause serious injuries and death. Watch your step to prevent falls, especially in winter conditions.

