

## *Slip, Trip and Fall Prevention*

Slips, trips, and falls account for 15% of all accidental deaths, second only to automobile fatalities. They are the leading cause of accidents, accounting for 30% of all reported accidents.

If you are the victim, is there really any difference between a slip, trip, or fall? After all, the pain is the same, so it really doesn't matter which of the three caused your accident, right? Actually, there really are some significant differences.

Slips occur when there is too little friction or traction between your feet and the walking surface. The most common causes of slips are wet surfaces, ice or other weather hazards, spills, and poor tread on footwear.

Preventive measures include:

- ✚ **Wet surfaces:** Shorten your stride, walk with feet pointed out slightly, and make wider turns.
- ✚ **Spills:** Clean up immediately. If you are unfamiliar with the contents of the spill, contact your supervisor. You may also consult an Employers Resource Safety Professional.
- ✚ **Weather hazards:** Walk more slowly so you can react to traction changes. Wear slip resistant shoes or boots, and dry off shoes as soon as practical after entering a building (wet shoes on dry floors are as dangerous as dry shoes on wet floors). Wear sunglasses on sunny winter days so you can more easily see slippery areas.
- ✚ **Poor tread on footwear, or generally poor traction:** Wear slip resistant footwear, apply abrasive strips to smooth walking surfaces, post warnings.

Trips commonly occur when your foot strikes an object and your momentum throws you off balance. To minimize the potential for this type of injury:

- ✚ Do not allow carried packages to obstruct your view.
- ✚ If glasses fog due to atmospheric changes, clear them immediately.
- ✚ Use only proven walkways.
- ✚ Close desk and file drawers when not in use.
- ✚ Report burned out or missing lights.
- ✚ Be aware of elevator threshold positions.
- ✚ Report any uneven or broken pavement, sidewalks, or handrails.

Falls usually take place from one level to another. One of the most common examples of this type of injury involves falling down stairs. Another involves using chairs as ladders.

Preventive measures include:

- ✚ NEVER stand on a chair to reach a high object - ALWAYS use a ladder.
- ✚ When using ladders, select the proper type and size, and use it properly. If you're unsure about what ladder to use, contact one of our Safety Professionals for a ladder training class.
- ✚ Walk up and down stairs, and never jump from the last step.
- ✚ Use handrails.
- ✚ Walk.
- ✚ Report any unsafe conditions.

There is one more precautionary tip that applies in all these cases, and that is to **PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT YOU ARE DOING**. This is among the most common causes of injuries, and is the easiest to correct.

*Unfortunately, even the best walking surfaces and most ideal weather conditions won't help if you're not watching where you're going.*