

Slips & Trips – Preventing Slips, Trips & Falls

Both slips and trips result from some a kind of unintended or unexpected change in the contact between the feet and the ground or walking surface.

Slips - Slips happen where there is too little friction or traction between the footwear and the walking surface. Common causes of slips are: wet or oily surfaces, occasional spills, weather hazards, loose or unanchored rugs mats, and walking surfaces that do not have same degree of traction in all areas.

Trips - Trips happen when your foot collides (strikes, hits) an object causing you to lose the balance and, eventually fall. Common causes of tripping are: obstructed view, poor lighting, clutter in your way, wrinkled carpeting, uncovered cables, bottom drawers not being closed or uneven (steps, thresholds) walking surfaces.

Falls – Falls are the possible end result of slipping or tripping. It is the most common action that actually injures the body due to striking some surrounding surface – floor, table, chair, etc. Fall injuries can be extremely serious, or even fatal. They range from bumps and bruises to broken fingers, arms, hips, backs and fractured skulls.

Prevention?

Housekeeping:

- cleaning all spills immediately,
- mark spills and wet areas when immediate cleanup is impossible,
- mopping or sweeping debris from floors,
- removing obstacles from walkways and always keeping them free of clutter,
- flatten rugs, mats and floor runners.
- always closing file cabinet or storage drawers,
- covering cables that cross walkways, install them below the walk surface when possible,
- keeping working areas and walkways well lit,

Flooring

Changing or modifying walking surfaces is the next level of preventing slip and trips. Recoating or replacing floors, installing mats, pressure-sensitive abrasive strips or abrasive-filled paint-on coating and metal or synthetic decking can further improve safety and reduce risk of falling. However, it's critical to remember that high-tech flooring requires good housekeeping as much as any other flooring. In addition, resilient, non-slippery flooring prevents or reduces foot fatigue and contributes to slip prevention measures.

Footwear

In workplaces where floors may be oily or wet or where workers spend considerable time outdoors, prevention of fall accidents should focus on selecting proper footwear. Since there is no footwear with anti-slip properties for every condition, consultation with manufacturers' is highly recommended. Properly fitting footwear increases comfort and prevents fatigue which, in turn, improves safety for the employee.

