

Preventing Slips, Trips, & Falls

Slip, trip and fall accidents account for many workplace accidents. In the County Workers Compensation Pool, slip, trip and fall accidents are the top cause of employee injury ... DOUBLE that of even lifting, the next common injury type. Falls can occur on level ground, such as slipping on an icy walkway, or tripping over an object, or from a different level, like falling off of a ladder. Injuries can be minor, serious, or deadly. Fatalities can occur in falls from as little as 4 feet.

Dealing with Hazards

There are things you can do to lower the risk of slip, trip, and fall injuries. Most falls are caused by hazards, defined as any unsafe act or unsafe condition that can result in an accident. Keeping a worksite clear of hazards by using the following precautions can help prevent accidents:

- Promptly clean up any spills
- Keep walkways clear and free of clutter
- Use proper step-stools or ladders
- Only carry loads you can safely handle
- Make sure lighting is adequate
- PAY ATTENTION! This is the most common cause of all accidents! If we would just pay attention to where we are and what we're doing, we could prevent most accidents.
- Select your footwear to match the surface on which you will be walking or working.

Type of Soles versus Type of Surfaces

Another way to minimize the risk of slips, trips, or falls is to choose the appropriate footwear for the worksite and work conditions. Below are some recommended shoe types for various floor/ground surfaces.

- Hard Rubber Soles - Work best on greasy concrete and wood

- Soft Rubber Soles - Work best on dry surfaces
- Crepe Soles - Work best on rough concrete surfaces, either wet or dry
- Neoprene Soles - Can be worn safely on most wet or dry surfaces

Dealing with Icy Conditions

The following steps can help you minimize the risk of slip, trip, and fall accidents due to icy surfaces.

- Walk flat-footed, like a duck, or on the balls of your feet, not your heels.
- Avoid routes that have not been cleared or appear to be glazed over.
- Avoid carrying large objects that can obstruct your view or cause you to lose your balance.
- Wear correct footwear for conditions (boots and possibly add traction devices).
- Traction devices can be stored in a coat pocket or purse when not in use.

Footwear traction devices pull on easily and fit practically any shoe or boot. They are ideal for preventing falls on any icy or slippery surface. They start as low as \$15 and are available at many retail outlets and internet stores. One popular brand is Yaktrax, which can be seen online at <http://www.yaktrax.com/>.

What This Means for Counties

While slips, trips, and falls are a common workplace injury, there are proactive steps you can take to minimize them. For assistance, contact any member of the CTSI Loss Prevention Team at 303-861-0507. 