

August 2024

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Slips, trips and falls are a common reason for many of the injuries in workplaces. They can cause minor injuries but can also lead to serious, long-term injuries. Many slip, trips and falls are avoidable and there are usually easy solutions a workplace can apply to control the risk, either by eliminating or minimizing it. It could be as simple as cleaning up a spillage straight away, or moving a cord on a walkway which can prevent injuries from occurring.

Why discuss this?

Prevent unnecessary injury from slip, trips and falls by improving awareness and training

Fewer injuries mean higher productivity

Makes sure workers know what to look for and what to do about it to reduce the risk of an injury occurring

What to watch out for that are common causes of slip, trips and falls?

Poor housekeeping & messy sites

Poor lighting

Uneven walking surfaces

Clutter on site

Uncovered cords and cables

Weather conditions (e.g. rain, ice, dust)

Obstructed views

Unsuitable footwear

Distractions (e.g. cell phone, other workers)

What can you do to help prevent slips, trips and falls occurring?

Keeping work areas clear & tidy from clutter, obstructions and rubbish

Any waste placed in designated bins

Clean up any leaks or spills immediately

Put tools and equipment away

Wear suitable footwear (e.g. grippy, anti-slip)

Ensure work areas are well lit and sufficient light for work

Keep cords and cables out of walkways, covered or secured

Be aware of your surroundings and focus on what you are doing

Work to the weather conditions

What if a slip, trip or fall occurs or nearly occurs?

Report all slip, trip and fall accidents and near misses, with or without injury, this will help identify the hazards and implement control measures to prevent reoccurrence

Key takeaways:

Simply cleaning up your work area as you go, can help reduce slip, trips and falls

Make sure you are always aware of your surroundings and look where you are walking

If you see a hazard that has the potential to cause a slip, trip or fall then pick it up or x it – don't wait for someone else to do it. Do it yourself!

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2024-08-12 TBT Compressed Air Safety

Many tools we use that are powered by compressed air can be hazardous if we don't utilize them properly. But most of us never give a second thought to the potential hazards associated with the hose that supplies the compressed air to those tools! So, this toolbox talk delves into avoiding some of the hazards present when we work with compressed air hoses.

- Only use hoses that are designed and rated for transporting compressed air when connecting to air compressors or supply pipes. A hose or tubing that is not meant for use with high-pressure compressed air (such as a plastic water hose) can easily burst or break in two, causing one end of the hose or tube to whip around and strike you or a co-worker.
- It is also of utmost importance that the clamps and similar fittings we use to connect compressed air hoses to couplers, valves, and other devices are of the proper type and size. A common mistake found at many job sites is the use of water hose clamps to connect couplers on compressed air hoses. Water hose clamps can cut into the hose and cause it to break. Also, they are not rated for the higher pressures associated with compressed air hoses and can break or come loose much easier than the clamps rated for use on air hoses. In other cases, we see the proper type of clamp used, but it is not of the size designed for the size of hose in use. So always make sure to use the proper size clamp, as one that is too big can come loose easily, while one that is too small can cause the hose to crack and break.
- When using a "crows-foot" style hose coupler, make sure you always install the proper type of retaining pin to lock both pieces of the coupler together. Failure to do so will allow the couplers to rotate and come loose.
- Inspect your compressed air hoses before use to make sure there are no cuts or abrasions that could cause the hose to break or come apart. Also look for loose clamps, malfunctioning couplers, and any other problems that could cause the hose to break or separate.
- If your compressed air hose is greater than one-half inch inside diameter, the compressor or supply branch line to which the hose is attached to must be equipped with a safety device that drops the air pressure in the event the hose breaks or otherwise separates.

Don't get hosed! Make sure your tools are in good repair and working properly!

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2024-08-19 Doing the right thing

An old proverb states “the longest distance between two points is a shortcut”. While this isn’t always true, it applies to many things in our day to day activities. Whether it be driving to work, and you encounter an unexpected delay or roadblock, skip a step in a process and make a critical error, or don’t use all the safety equipment that you are issued and expected to wear and you or a coworker suffers an injury, this rings true in every walk of life.

So why is it the “right thing” to follow the proper procedures that are put in place you may ask? Policies and procedures are put into place to prevent mistakes and avoid errors that can be costly to an organization. These items are developed by a series of events that have happened, most of them repeatedly, that have incurred a cost of lost time from the jobsite or office. Events that can and will be prevented by following the correct procedures. Now this doesn’t mean that procedures cannot be changed if there is a logical and safe way to do it effectively and efficiently, however, history does seem to repeat itself.

Even if you are wearing the proper safety gear, if a coworker or other tradesperson isn’t, you could cause injury to someone else. I feel it’s all of our obligation to provide a safe environment for everyone to work in. After all, we all have someone to go home to and that’s what matters the most at the end of the day. These procedures are put in place and well communicated prior to anyone stepping foot on the jobsite or in the office for the first time. Accidents can and will happen, it’s the severity of the result that can be lessened by doing the right thing!

Have a safe and enjoyable workweek!

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2024-08-26 All Backed Up

Taking safety precautions is a high priority when you're preparing for your workday. Whether you are seeking out that tough clog in a pipe that is "supposed" to be newly installed, or a storm drain filled with the runoff from washing out a concrete truck, trying to move equipment and tools, you never know what you may encounter. You may find a whole lot of surprises (some unmentionable) when trying to do these tasks.

Construction sites have many moving parts right from the excavation to the final cleaning that need frequent inspections to avoid these schedule backups or delays. If you can remember the game show, The \$100,000 Pyramid, imagine yourself trying to give the clues to the category, "Things that get backed up"

Sewer pipes

Delivery trucks

Construction schedules

The line in the emergency room

Your digestive tract

The line at the concession stand

The list is probably endless.

Accidents can be avoided, and delays can be minimized by performing frequent inspections. Equipment and tool inspections prior to each use are vital to make sure they work safely and properly. If you are "saving time" by not doing the inspection that would have prevented an equipment or tool breakdown, chances are sooner or later that saved time will turn into lost time, either to injury or schedule backups.

Inspections for workmanship and accuracy during different stages of the construction process prevent rework and costly material waste. Did you ever hear the saying "There's never enough time to do it right, but there's always time to do it over" ? We need to be diligent in our processes to avoid instances which will ultimately lead to schedule backups or delays.

Back up the truck, and get on the right path, keep it safe!

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