Fall Protection - Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls in the Workplace

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Diligence in identifying and avoiding hazards is the key to avoiding falls. Here are a few things we can do to eliminate, or at least, minimize slips, trips, and falls in the workplace.

- Take immediate action when you see any type of foreign material on the floor, especially liquids, food, dusts, or powders, as these could reduce friction when we step on them. Either clean up the material right away or take positive measures to warn others of their presence while you contact staff responsible for cleaning up such hazards.
- Always make it a point to wipe your feet on mats or rugs that have been placed near exterior doorways and other passageways to collect excessive moisture from the soles of shoes or boots as we walk from a wet environment to a dry environment.
- Report any loose rugs or mats that seem to move or slide as you walk across them, as their non-skid backing may have become worn or loose.
- Always take advantage of using handrails every time you go up or down stairways, as they can help you maintain balance and avoid falling if you should happen to slip.
- Always make a conscience effort to pay special attention where floor surfaces transition from one type of material to another, as changes in friction often occur at these areas
- Do not place extension cords, hoses, or similar items across designated walking paths. Or, if doing so on a temporary basis is unavoidable, be certain to make the hazard highly visible by placing safety cones or other effective warning devices to alert others of its presence until it can be removed.
- Same thing goes for setting bags, boxes, tools, or other items in designated walking areas, even temporarily. Instead, place such items on counters or appropriate storage areas.
- Be on the lookout for any damaged flooring surfaces, such as broken or missing tiles, broken concrete, or edges of carpet that have come loose from the floor. If you do see such a hazard, take immediate steps to alert others, and then report it to your supervisor so it

can be repaired.

- Always pre-survey areas where you will be walking while carrying any large object, such as a box, that could block your view, so you can relocate any tripping hazards beforehand.
- Always keep a firm grip with one hand on a handrail when ascending stairs. That will give you something to hold on should you catch the toe of your shoe or boot on the edge of a step. Of course, you should hold the handrail when descending stairs, too.
- Avoid walking in areas where there is little or no light. It is too easy to trip on or over something if you cannot see it in the dark. Take the time to make sure the overhead lights are turned on, if available, and if not, use a flashlight or other portable light source to help you see. Report burned out lightbulbs, too.
- Lastly, avoid walking backwards. It is very easy to trip backwards over something on the floor that you cannot see. And it’s harder to recover your balance if you do happen to trip.

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