

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO GUIDELINES FOR PREVENTING SLIPS, TRIPS, AND FALLS

PURPOSE: This document provides guidance to help staff members prevent slips, trips, and falls.

REGULATORY:

OSHA 29 CFR 1910 Subpart D; Walking-Working Surfaces – General Requirements

[1910 Subpart D - Walking-Working Surfaces | Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(osha.gov\)](https://www.osha-slc.gov/1910-Subpart-D-Walking-Working-Surfaces)

Additional Reference:

ANSI A1264.2-2006; Provision for the slip resistance on walking/working surfaces.

DEFINITIONS:

Fall: When a person is too far off their center of balance. There are two types of falls:

Fall at same level: fall to same walking or working surface or fall into or against objects above same surface.

Fall to lower level: fall to level below walking or working surface.

Slip: When there is too little friction or traction between a person's foot (footwear) and the walking/working surface and a person loses their balance.

Slip, Trip, Fall (STF) Friction: The resistance encountered when an object (foot) is moved in contact with another (ground). Friction is necessary in order to walk without slipping.

Trip: When a person's foot or lower leg hits an object, and their upper body continues to move throwing the person off balance or when a person steps down unexpectedly to a lower surface (misstep) and loses their balance.

Walking-Working Surface: Any horizontal or vertical surface on or through which an employee walks, works, or gains access to a work area or workplace location.

Causes of Slips, Trips, and Falls:

- Floor or ground surface which is uneven
- Unsuitable floor coverings
- Slippery surfaces/weather conditions
- Dry products like dust, powder, granules on a surface making the walking-working surface slippery
- Changes in levels/heights of flooring or ground
- Cables, power cords, hoses or any other object that obstructs pathways/walkways

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- Poor lighting
- Poor housekeeping
- Mounting/dismounting equipment or vehicles
- Physical condition, fatigue, illness, or stress
- Uneven or damaged floors or steps
- Lack of stair railings
- Improperly secured floor mats, rugs, or runners

INJURIES:

If a worker slips, trips, or falls, an injury may occur such as a sprain, strain, bruise, or fracture. Typical injury sites include the knees, ankles, and or foot. Other parts of the body that may be injured in a fall include the wrist or elbow, the back, neck or shoulders, the hip, or the head.

The worker shall notify his or her supervisor immediately in the event of a slip, trip, or fall incident. The supervisor shall assess the incident and determine the next steps to be taken. Supervisory options shall include, but are not limited to, sending the employee to the health clinic or notifying first responders for advanced care or treatment. All workers must complete a work injury report the day of the injury if feasible.

What Not to Do:

- Do not run or move too quickly. Maintain a safe pace for the walking working surface.
- Do not engage in horseplay at any time.
- Do not store items on the floor that may cause a tripping hazard.
- Do not stand on unstable surfaces.
- Do not stand on boxes, chairs, tables, or makeshift devices to increase your working height.
- Do not leave drawers or doors partially open.
- Do not carry loads which obstruct your vision. Look where you're going, go where you're looking.
- Do not skip steps or run up or down stairs.

What to Do:

- Wear sturdy footwear with slip resistant soles.
- Make sure all areas are kept tidy and free of clutter.
- Clean up all spills immediately.
- Place caution signs when cleaning or mopping the floor.

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- Make sure equipment is in good working order.
- Make sure there is adequate lighting.
- Follow safe work practices at all times.
- Correct footwear is key to preventing slips, trips, and falls. Properly fitted footwear increases comfort, prevents fatigue and will improve employee safety.

ADDITIONAL STEPS TO REDUCE SLIPS, TRIPS, AND FALLS:

- Maintain clean, tidy work areas free of clutter. If you drop something pick it up.
- Replace burned out bulbs and faulty switches promptly, ensuring well-lit work areas and walkways.
- Clear walkways of slippery materials such as grease, oil, water, snow, and ice.
- Store all materials in a neat and orderly manner.
- Promptly correct any conditions which may cause a slip, trip, or fall.
- Remove debris and accumulations of spilled materials. Mark areas of spilled materials or wet areas with signs or barricades.
- If people are leaving wet footprints after walking across a floormat it has become saturated and must be replaced.
- Report hazards promptly and ensure they are corrected.
- Eliminate hazards such as small spills and walkway clutter, if able to do so safely.
- Keep eyes on the path which is being travelled. Do not run.
- Maintain three points of contact when descending or ascending ladders, steps, or stairs.
- Do not use a ladder in front of a closed doorway unless the doorway is guarded or locked to prevent someone from opening it and displacing the ladder.
- Use caution when entering/exiting vehicles and/or equipment.
- Cover cords or cables which cross walkways.
- Loads should not be carried or pushed which block a person's vision.
- Floor openings must be covered. Edges/transition areas must be marked.
- Mats, rugs, or carpets that do not lie flat should be tacked or taped in place.
- Ensure drawers or cabinets are closed immediately after use.
- Any hazardous condition that cannot be corrected immediately must be reported to your supervisor. Steps to prevent access to the area must be taken until the situation is corrected.