



NC DEQ Toolbox Talk

Preventing Slip, Trip and Fall Injuries

Slips, trips and falls are the second leading cause of death in US workplaces, only behind motor vehicle accidents. Falls are divided into two categories. The first category involves falls to same level the worker is on. A second, and even more dangerous category involves falls to a lower level. This category includes falls from ladders, down a flight of stairs, off a roof, off scaffolding, into a pit, etc.

Slip, trip and fall injuries can cause minor injuries like bruises or sprains. More serious injuries can include fractures, head injuries, brain injuries, and even death.

US Workplace Injury Statistics:

- In 2020 there were over 211,000 recorded slip, trip and fall injuries.
- In 2020 136 workers died from falls to the same level.
- In 2020 805 workers died from falls to a lower level.
- Slip, trip and falls incidents are the second leading cause of death in the workplace, only surpassed by motor vehicle accidents.

OSHA Standards: The OSHA standards written to prevent slip, trip and fall injuries require the following:

- Floors are kept dry, clean, and free of obstructions.
- Aisles and walkways are kept clear and in good repair.
- Employees are trained initially and annually in how to recognize, avoid, and correct potential hazards.
- Uneven surfaces such as cracked floor tiles, loose or folded floor mats, and other trip hazards are corrected as soon as possible. Trip hazards are marked with signage until permanent repairs are complete.
- Equipment used for walking or working at height meets safety criteria and is kept in good repair. (ladders, scaffolding, stairs, handrails, etc.)

Common Causes of Slips, Trips and Falls:

- **Slippery Surfaces** caused by spills, leaks, rain, ice, etc.
- **Cluttered Walkways** obstructed by tools, materials, electrical cords, etc.
- **Poor Lighting** which makes obstructions or elevation changes hard to see.
- **Uneven Surfaces** such as cracked floor tiles, loose or folded floor mats, or thresholds where two different flooring materials meet.
- **Unsafe Use** of ladders, scaffolding, etc.

Best Prevention Practices:

Housekeeping

- Clean up wet areas immediately and mark wet floors with proper signage.
- Keep all walkways clear of clutter and power cords.
- Ensure good lighting anywhere employees walk or work.
- Repair uneven surfaces and replaced damaged flooring as soon as possible.
- Mark permanent changes in elevation with bright, contrasting colored paint or tape.

Work Practices

- Wear appropriate slip resistant footwear that is suitable for the work environment.
- Walk slowly and carefully.
- Do not carry materials in a way that prevents you from seeing your footing.
- Always use tools such as ladders and scaffolding correctly, and only after proper training.
- Treat walkways with anti-icing agents when necessary, due to weather.

Communication and Training

- Correct and report hazards immediately (wet floors, loose tiles, broken handrails)
- Hazards that can't be repaired immediately should be marked with signs
- Attend safety training and pay attention
- Be aware of changes in flooring conditions caused by weather such as rain, snow, or ice.

NC DEQ Toolbox Talk Quiz
Slip, Trip and Fall

- 1) Slips, trips and falls are the:
 - a) Leading cause of workplace deaths
 - b) Second leading cause of workplace deaths
 - c) Third leading cause of workplace deaths

- 2) True or False: OSHA requires workers and employers to keep walkways clear, dry and free of obstructions.

- 3) Which is a common cause of slips?
 - a) Good lighting
 - b) Spilled liquids
 - c) Non-slip footwear
 - d) Clean aisles

- 4) Which practice helps prevent trips?
 - a) Leaving cords across walkways
 - b) Running in hallways
 - c) Proper housekeeping and clear walkways
 - d) Ignoring small spills

- 5) True or False: We only need to worry about falls from elevated surfaces like ladders.

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Answer: B

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Answer: True

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Answer: B

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 - c) Proper housekeeping and clear walkways
 - d) Ignoring small spills

Answer: C

- 5) True or False: We only need to worry about falls from elevated surfaces like ladders. Falls to the same level are not that dangerous.

Answer: False