



# SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS

Knowing how these three terms differ in cause and effect will improve the effectiveness of your prevention plan.

**Slips:** Slips involve the loss of contact between foot and floor due to lack of traction between footwear and the walking surface. Usually, the foot goes forward and the person falls back.

**Trips:** A trip occurs when a foot strikes an object, resulting in loss of balance. Momentum causes the person to fall forward. Trips occur when there's an obstacle in the path that the individual fails to see.

**Falls:** There are two kinds of falls: from the same level, or from a height. Falling from heights of less than three metres involve stepladders, stools, stairs, etc. Falling from heights of over three metres involve scaffolds and roofs, etc.

## WHY PREVENT SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

Slips, trips and falls are some of the leading causes of lost-time injuries at work in Ontario. They can occur at any workplace. Almost 20 per cent of all lost-time injury claims in Ontario involve slips, trips and falls.

## WHAT THE LAW SAYS

Preventing slips, trips and falls should be a goal of every safe and healthy workplace. Employers have an obligation to:

- Identify and assess job-related hazards;
- Advise and train workers about risks in their job and in the workplace;
- Encourage workers to report on slip, trip and fall hazards;
- Establish controls to reduce workers' exposure to slip, trip and fall hazards;
- Ensure that preventive measures are working.

Ministry of Labour inspectors focus on workplace hazards, including those which may result in slips, trips and falls. They may take enforcement action if they find violations of the OHS Act and its regulations.

Source: "Prevent Slips, Trips and Falls in all Workplaces," Ontario Ministry of Labour, [http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/sawo/pubs/fs\\_falls.php](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/sawo/pubs/fs_falls.php)

## STEP ONE: RAISE AWARENESS (RECOGNITION)

### WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

- What is the injury history in our workplace? Have we had near misses or slips, trips and falls?
- What are the results of our risk assessments to identify job-related hazards?
- What safe work practices and training requirements have we implemented, and when were they last reviewed?

## RISK FACTORS

- Poor Housekeeping
- Uneven Surfaces
- Wet or Slippery Surfaces
- Unsuitable Footwear
- Unsafe Behaviour

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## STEP ONE: RAISE AWARENESS (RECOGNITION) cont'd

### WHAT WE SHOULD LOOK FOR

- Poor housekeeping
- Wet or slippery surfaces (e.g. spills, work processes, weather conditions)
- Uneven floor surfaces or changes in surface level
- Unsafe behaviour (e.g. rushing down steps or stairs, distractions, overreaching, fatigue)
- Use of alternate climbing devices (e.g. stools, tables, chairs)
- Improper use of climbing devices
- Equipment that is damaged or in poor condition
- Missing protective devices (e.g. guardrails, handrails) on elevated platforms, walkways, and work areas
- Unsuitable footwear
- Reduced visibility (e.g. poor lighting, limited field of view)

## STEP TWO: TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS IN OUR WORKPLACE (CONTROLS)

- Make sure company policy clearly outlines the rules and standards for housekeeping, lighting and inspections
- Provide continuous follow-up to make sure that the rules are adequate and are being followed, and to identify what needs improvement
- Assist supervisors in meeting their obligation to ensure the rules are followed
- Complete risk assessments to identify hazards, and implement a hazard-reporting process
- Investigate all incidents to determine how to eliminate the cause
- Provide prompt maintenance
- Identify appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and ensure it is in good repair and used properly (e.g. footwear, fall arrest/fall restraint systems, anti-slip tapes, strips, floor mat tape, slip-resistant shoes)
- Provide proper training to workers on how to clean up spills, the proper use of fall protection equipment, the use of proper guard rails and covers over holes, etc.
- Maintain or redesign floors, walkways and other surfaces for safety, keeping them free of obstructions
- Ensure workers have unobstructed views
- Avoid distractions for workers who work from heights or who are working their way down from heights

### LINKS TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Click on the hyperlinks below for additional information:

- Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls
- Ladder Safety
- Walking & Working Surfaces
- Good Housekeeping at Work
- Falls Infographic poster

