

Tips to Reduce Slips, Trips, and Falls in the Workplace

Slips, trips and falls (STFs) are one of the largest causes of injuries in workplaces around the World. In 2010, the United States National Safety Council registered a total of 26,100 fatalities as a result of falls (an increase of 7% from the previous year). In Canada, falls make up the vast majority of injuries suffered by people aged 12 and older and in the UK, over 10,000 workers were injured by STFs in 2011.

With such significant statistics, it is clear the STFs cause a lot of damage to both individuals and businesses, but how can they be reduced in number? While there is no way to eliminate all slips, trips, and falls, it is most definitely possible to reduce both the number, and the severity of such events. Here are six tips to help you keep your workplace on the right track to reducing your employees' risk of injury.

1. Wear appropriate footwear. Not all shoes will provide you with the traction that you need on every floor. If possible, choose a pair of non-slip shoes.

a. Many new rubber-soled non-slip shoes will still to slip and slide immediately after purchase. Take them out for a 30-minute walk on a rough concrete sidewalk or gravel road to develop some roughness on the sole and improve traction. Alternatively you can take the shoes off and scratch the heels with a rock or even a knife. Doing so will provide the shoe with additional grip that the shoe would otherwise not provide until it becomes broken in.

2. Clean up spills and leaks immediately. If the area of wetness is located on the floor, be sure to place a "wet floor" sign visibly near the area.

3. Ensure that no objects are resting on the floor in designated walkways or open areas. This includes boxes and cases!

4. Never work in the dark. Doing so can increase the chance that you will fail to see slippery areas, objects on the ground, or even a person coming around a corner.

5. Do not climb onto a chair (especially one with wheels!), desk, or other surface in order to reach objects located on high shelves. Instead use a ladder and ask someone to spot you as you climb.

6. Do not carry boxes, crates, or any load that obstructs your line-of-sight. Doing so can cause risk of collision, slip, trip or a fall to yourself, as well as to others that may be walking nearby.

These tips may not completely eliminate STFs in your workplace, but they certainly will help.