



FALL PREVENTION ALLIANCE TOOLBOX TALK ON

SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS PREVENTION

Company: _____ Job Site Location: _____

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ Finish Time: _____ Foreman/Supervisor: _____

Prevention of slips, trips, and falls requires that all personnel recognize the elements that create the hazards. Ongoing training is an excellent method with which to enable workers and supervisors alike to identify and eliminate the conditions that can lead to slip, trip, and fall injuries. A safety assessment of the workplace allows identification of the areas that might prove unsafe as far as slips and falls are concerned. Most, if not all walking/working surface hazards can be eliminated or avoided through proper general housekeeping, cleanup of current operations, and timely maintenance and repair of these surfaces.

Friction, momentum, and gravity are factors involved in the physical forces that cause slips, trips and falls.

Friction — Is the resistance between things that can create traction, such as between your footwear and the walking surface.

Momentum — Speed and size make up the scientific measure of momentum. In workplace terms, it means that large items moving at higher speeds will fall harder than the same item moving at a slower speed.

Gravity — Obviously, this is the force that pulls you to the ground when you fall. The key point is to keep your balance so you can avoid falling.

Preventing injuries from slips — Although engineering controls, such as non-skid coatings on floors or step surfaces, are implemented to reduce the threat of slips, trips, and falls, the right footwear can also play an important role. The material that the sole of a shoe is made from will provide varying amounts of traction, depending on the type of floor. For instance, shoes with neoprene soles can be used safely on most wet or dry work surfaces. However, they are not recommended for oily conditions.

Why trips happen—A trip occurs when a worker's foot hits an object, and his or her balance is thrown off. This creates enough momentum for the worker to fall. Trips happen when a work area is cluttered, when lighting is poor, or when an area has loose footing. You can avoid trips by:

- Making sure you can see over the load you are carrying
- Ensuring that lighting is adequate
- Taping down extension cords or keeping them out of walkways
- Keeping work areas free of clutter and litter
- Keeping equipment out of walkways and other traffic areas

Falls — occur whenever you move too far out from your center of balance. Most falls are same surface (not from one elevation down to another) falls. Falls from heights should be eliminated by taking the proper safety measures such as wearing fall protection and installing guardrails or barriers. To avoid falls consider the following measures:

- Do not jump. Carefully lower yourself while climbing down from trucks, work stages, or ladders.
- Check lighting. Make sure work sites are well lit.
- Repair or replace stairs or handrails that are loose or broken.
- Keep passageways and aisles clear of clutter.
- Wear boots or shoes with appropriate non-skid sole.

Workers can protect themselves from slips, trips, and falls by following these common sense suggestions:

- Workers should wear shoes suitable for the conditions in the work area. The soles of shoes help increase the friction between the shoe and the floor surface.
- Floors should be properly cleaned. After cleaning the floor ensure that no “build-up” of slippery detergent or cleaning agent has accumulated.
- Alert employees to wet surfaces: Post signs and barricades in the area to warn of wet surfaces.
- Add traction aids to slippery surfaces or surfaces that are frequently oily or wet.
- Work area must be kept properly lighted.
- Keep work areas free of clutter and debris.
- Walking surfaces must be maintained in good condition.
- Walkways and aisles must be kept clear.
- Give stairways special attention. Repair loose stair treads, broken floor boards, and unstable handrails.
- Immediately clean up any spills, water, or oil on steps.
- Make sure stairways are well-lit.

Through the OSHA and Houston Fall Prevention Alliance, this Toolbox Talk was developed for informational purposes only. It does not necessarily reflect the official views of OSHA or the U.S. Department of Labor. July 2016.

The Houston Fall Prevention Alliance was formed by the below organizations to provide their members, and others, with information, guidance and access to training resources that will help them protect the health and safety of workers, particularly by reducing and preventing exposure to fall hazards in the construction industries and addressing fall related issues and understand the rights of workers and the responsibilities of employers under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act). In developing this alliance, these organizations recognize that OSHA's State Plan and On-site Consultation Project partners are an integral part of the OSHA national effort.





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- If working on elevated surfaces ensure that shoes have adequate traction.
- Never walk backwards on a roof or elevated surface.
- Install and use proper safety devices and equipment when working on an elevated surface.
- When working on an elevated surface take extra caution to eliminate tripping hazards and obstacles.

Conclusion: It is not difficult to keep the workplace clear of slip, trip, and fall hazards. All members of the workforce must be properly trained in the recognition and avoidance of such hazards. Slips, trips and falls are a common cause for injuries that can occur at home just as easily as they do at work. Common hazards at home are children’s toys, skateboards, garden tools, slippery floors, wild dogs and cats, and extension cords. Follow these safety tips to help avoid slip, trip, and fall hazards.

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