Prevent slips, trips and falls in all workplaces

Slips, trips and falls are some of the leading causes of workplace lost-time injury in Ontario. They can occur in any workplace, and nearly 20 per cent of all lost-time injury claims in Ontario relate to slips, trips and falls.

Preventing such injuries should be a key goal of every workplace health and safety program. In safe and healthy workplaces, employers:

- Advise and train workers about risks in their job and in the workplace
- Encourage workers to participate in the health and safety program through reporting of slip, trip and fall hazards
- Identify and assess job-related hazards
- Establish controls to reduce workers’ exposure to slip, trip and fall hazards
- Make sure that preventive measures are working

This fact sheet is intended to help employers, workers and other workplace parties to understand slip, trip and fall hazards, to implement occupational health and safety policies and to develop and maintain programs to prevent workplace injuries. Refer to the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and the regulations to determine legal obligations.

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 Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations.

Common hazards

When looking for slip, trip and fall hazards in your workplace, consider:

- Slippery surfaces
- Seasonal trip hazards (snow and ice)
- Spills of wet or dry substances
- Changes of level and slopes of walkways
- Unsecured mats
- Debris and items stored in pedestrian walkways
- Trailing cables in pedestrian walkways
- Smoke, steam or dust obscuring view
- Unsuitable footwear
- Poor lighting

This list presents some common hazards; there are many others.

Controlling hazards

When a hazard has been identified, the employer must take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect workers. Employers must provide information, instruction and supervision to workers to protect their health and safety.
When establishing safe work practices for your workplace, consider:

- Characteristics of physical work area
- Weather conditions (snow, ice, rain)
- Tasks performed
- Workers’ work practices
- Equipment

Some methods for controlling hazards leading to slips, trips and falls include, but are not limited to:

**Engineering controls**
- Type of flooring
- Slope of surface (ramps, handrails)
- Surface free of obstructions/holes
- Drainage
- Lighting levels, non-glare, contrast
- Equipment for front-line workers (mop, shovel)
- Signage
- Sufficient space
- Minimizing environmental influences, e.g., blocking wind to prevent wet surfaces icing at entranceways

**Administrative controls**
- Training workers
- Safe practices, e.g., procedure for cleaning spills, requirement for two workers to transport a cart that a worker cannot see around
- Reporting hazards
- Prompt maintenance
- Job design (identifying tasks requiring excessive pushing/pulling, line-of-sight obstruction)
- Equipment readily available, e.g., shovels, mops, buckets
- Addressing poor work practices
- Joint Health and Safety Committee monthly inspections
- Review slips, trips and same-level fall hazards

**Housekeeping**
- Clean spills
- Remove debris, snow and ice
- Routinely clean floors thoroughly
- Clean castors on wheeled carts
- Provide mats

**Personal protective equipment**
- Appropriate footwear for task, e.g., heel characteristics, sole (anti-slip, boots)

We all have the right to work in a safe and healthy environment. A compliant health and safety culture requires all workplace parties to adhere to occupational health and safety requirements and to pay constant, appropriate attention to workplace health and safety.

**More information**


Ministry of Labour, Spot the Fall Hazards Tools: [http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/tools/](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/tools/)

Ontario’s Health and Safety Associations: [http://healthandsafetyontario.ca/](http://healthandsafetyontario.ca/)
