



YCPARMIA Safety Journal

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Fall-Proof Tips

How to prevent slip and trip injuries

Slips, trips, and falls are among the most common hazards in most workplaces. Any number of injuries can occur as a result. For example, you could get a strain or sprain from a simple slip even if you don't actually fall. The jerking motion when your feet slip and your body reacts to regain balance can cause a muscle strain or a sprain like a twisted ankle. Worse, a fall could tear a ligament or break a bone. Slips, trips, and falls can also result in damage to the back or spine.

Even though it might not be your job, take the time to remove slip hazards to prevent accidents. For instance:

- ✓ **Clean up spills** of water, oil, or other liquids. Paper towels can be used for water. Oil and other chemicals may require special absorbent wipes.
- ✓ **Repair or report liquid leaks** right away. If you can't do the job safely, report the problem and place a barrier around the area to prevent slips.
- ✓ **Pick objects off the floor.** Even a small object like a piece of plastic on a concrete floor could cause a slip.
- ✓ **Sweep up debris** and waste materials. Some granular particles can act just like liquid spills on the floor and cause a slip and fall.
- ✓ **Wear slip-resistant shoes.**

Also take responsibility for trip hazards by following these precautions:

- ✓ **Clean up debris** such as straps and bands from boxes that can become entangled in a person's legs.
- ✓ **Put away electrical cords** and air hoses when not in use. And even when using them, be careful where you place them; make sure they're not located in places where somebody could trip over them.
- ✓ **Don't stack boxes or other items in walkways.**
- ✓ **Keep drawers closed** so that someone doesn't come by and tumble over an open drawer.
- ✓ **Carry objects carefully.** Make sure you can see where you're going, and watch out for obstacles that could cause a trip.
- ✓ **Put away tools** and other equipment after use. Someone could trip and fall over something you left lying around—perhaps even you!

KEEP ON YOUR FEET AT HOME, TOO!

Even if you make all the right moves at work, you're still at risk of slip, trip, and fall injuries at home. According to the National Safety Council, many falls and more than 30 percent of disabling injuries from falls occur off the job. And the leading cause of off-the-job deaths is also falls.

So stay on your feet at home by taking these simple precautions:

- ⇒ Keep a stepstool handy for reaching high shelves in kitchens and closets.
- ⇒ Follow all the same ladder safety precautions you use at work, including choosing the right ladder for the job, inspecting it before use, setting it up securely, and using it properly.
- ⇒ Clean up spills in the kitchen and bathroom right away. And remember, not only liquids but also granular materials like sugar or salt could cause a slip.
- ⇒ Don't leave clutter on floors or stairs.
- ⇒ Make sure electrical cords are safely out of walkways where somebody could trip over them.
- ⇒ Fix damaged flooring like frayed carpets or curling tiles before somebody trips.
- ⇒ Make sure stairwells are well lit and handrails are secure.
- ⇒ Put carpeting on stairs (or rubber treads on cellar stairs) to prevent slips and falls.
- ⇒ Keep your yard free of tripping hazards like hoses and garden tools. Put garden equipment away after each use.

Be a Good Buddy

Help new employees learn safety practices

Forty percent of people injured at work have been on the job for less than a year. It seems like a high percentage, doesn't it? Why is it so high? In a nutshell, new employees lack the knowledge and experience that is gathered by workers who have spent more time on the job.

How can you help new co-workers become familiar with our safety practices so that they can keep from getting injured during their early days on the job?

- ☞ **Don't assume that new co-workers know all about safety.** It's not that new employees are stupid. It's just that this workplace environment is new to them, and they might not know how to translate their safety knowledge from their previous job into their new environment.
- ☞ **Remember that new folks might be reluctant to ask questions** for fear of looking dumb. This can be especially true of young workers in their first job. Help new employees feel comfortable about asking questions. If you don't know the answer, refer them to someone who does.
- ☞ **Don't overlook unsafe behavior.** If you see a new co-worker doing something unsafe, speak up and show this person the safe way. If you ignore unsafe behavior there could be an accident.

New Equipment Safety

Learn all the required precautions

New equipment can help you do your job better, easier, and faster. But you need to learn a lot about a new piece of equipment before you can operate it safely. How would you respond to the statements below about operating new equipment? Circle T for true or F for false.

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|--|----------|----------|
| 1. Always learn what you need to know about new equipment before you operate it. | T | F |
| 2. Always use the same PPE for operating new equipment as for old. | T | F |
| 3. You can bypass the recommended procedure for start-up and shutdown of new equipment if you're experienced on the old equipment. | T | F |
| 4. If a new piece of equipment malfunctions, finish the job you're working on before you report the problem. | T | F |
| 5. If you think you're mechanical and understand how a new piece of equipment works, you are qualified to service and repair it. | T | F |

Answers:

(1) T (2) F. You might need different or additional PPE. Check with your supervisor. (3) F. Always follow the procedures recommended by the manufacturer. (4) F. Stop working, turn off the equipment, tag it out, and report the problem to your supervisor. (5) F. Only service or repair new equipment if you've been trained and authorized to do so.

10 GOOD REASONS TO WEAR PPE

If you ever think you don't need to wear your assigned personal protective equipment (PPE), remember that your PPE:

1. Protects you against hazards—sometimes deadly ones
2. Decreases the risk of injury and illness
3. Reduces the severity of injuries when accidents do occur
4. Ensures your continued productivity
5. Allows you to stay on the job and keep bringing home a paycheck
6. Improves your job performance in many cases
7. May ease the strain of your effort
8. Is required by OSHA and our work rules
9. Is disposable when damaged—you're lungs, eyes, skin, etc., are not
10. Helps ensure that you go home safe and healthy at the end of the workday

PREVENT FALLS FROM LADDERS

Every year thousands of workers are injured—and some are killed—as a result of falls from ladders. Don't be one of them. Follow these ladder safety tips:

- ⇒ Set your ladder on a firm, level surface.
- ⇒ Hold on to the rail when you climb, and keep one hand on the rail while you work.
- ⇒ Carry tools in a tool belt or shoulder strap.
- ⇒ Hoist materials and tools in a bucket.
- ⇒ Don't lean too far in either direction—move the ladder.
- ⇒ Don't strain to reach a high spot—use a taller ladder.
- ⇒ Don't stand on the top two steps of a stepladder or the top three rungs of an extension ladder.

Put Safety First

Do you qualify as a safe worker?

June is **National Safety Month**, which is a perfect time to ask yourself if you qualify as a safe worker. Check “Yes” or “No” for the following questions.

Do you:

	YES	NO
★ Treat safety as a very important job responsibility?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
★ Plan each job before you start, and anticipate potential hazards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
★ Wear assigned personal protective equipment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
★ Understand the hazards of the job?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
★ Use labels, material safety data sheets, warning signs, etc., to get the information you need to work safely?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
★ Inspect tools and equipment before you use them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
★ Follow safety rules while you work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
★ Focus on your work and avoid distractions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
★ Avoid taking shortcuts or fooling around on the job?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
★ Practice good housekeeping?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
★ Know what to do in an emergency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
★ Ask questions when you’re unsure of what to do or how to do it?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
★ Work with a buddy when engaged in very hazardous tasks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you couldn’t honestly check all the Yes boxes, you could be headed for an accident and an injury. Start today to make the safe choice every workday.

Looking for Eye Hazards

Always wear the right protection

Here’s a brief overview of eye safety protection:

Safety glasses protect against flying objects or glare. They have extra sturdy frames and either clear or tinted lenses that are strong enough to resist impact. Regular safety glasses protect you against flying objects from the front. If you need protection for possible flying objects that come at you from the side, you want to wear safety glasses with side shields. If objects could hit your eyes from top or bottom as well, then you need safety glasses with eye cup shields.

Safety goggles protect you against dust, splashes, flying objects, and sparks that could hurt your eyes coming from any direction. Some goggles have a cup over each eye. Others have a frame and lens that extends over both eyes. If goggles have a rigid frame, they are often cushioned to protect the skin around your eyes. Some goggles are directly ventilated to let air circulate around your eyes. Indirectly ventilated goggles are sometimes required, however, to keep out dust particles and chemical vapors.

Which kind do you need? Check with your supervisor. He or she will make sure that you get the right kind of protection for the work you do. Then it’s up to you to inspect it before each use and wear it every day.

WHAT TO DO IN A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT

Follow this advice:

- ⌚ Move to the side of the road, if possible.
- ⌚ Call the police and ask for emergency medical services, if necessary.
- ⌚ Check on others involved in the accident if possible and perform first aid as needed.
- ⌚ Once the police are on the scene, collect and provide information such as name, insurance information, driver’s license, and so on.
- ⌚ Avoid discussing fault or blame.
- ⌚ Call your insurance company from the scene or as soon as you get to a phone.

PROTECT AGAINST MRSA

You may have heard about Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA. Although this antibiotic-resistant staph infection occurs most frequently among people who have weakened immune systems in hospitals and healthcare facilities, anybody can become ill when exposed to MRSA. Staph or MRSA infections usually appear as skin infections that look like pimples or boils.

Keep healthy with these tips from the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health designed to prevent the spread of MRSA:

- 👉 Wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- 👉 Clean and cover cuts and scrapes with a bandage until healed.
- 👉 Avoid contact with other people’s wounds or bandages.
- 👉 Avoid sharing personal items such as uniforms and PPE.
- 👉 Follow workplace housekeeping rules.

Cancer from the Sun

Protect your skin from the summer sun

June is **Cancer from the Sun Month**. If you spend a lot of time out in the sun—in June or any time of the year—wear sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or greater and cover up during the sunniest part of the day (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.). According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, there are three main forms of skin cancer that can be caused by prolonged sun exposure—basal cell carcinoma (the least serious), squamous cell carcinoma, and melanoma (the most serious, and sometimes fatal).

People at greatest risk of getting cancer from the sun are those who:

- ✧ Always burn when they've been out in the sun
- ✧ Have red or blond hair, green or blue eyes, freckles, and fair skin
- ✧ Have a family history of melanoma

Symptoms of developing skin cancer include:

- ✧ Change in the size or color of a mole
- ✧ A sore that doesn't heal
- ✧ Any skin growth that increases in size
- ✧ A spot on the skin that itches, hurts, or keeps scabbing

Check your body from head to toe every 3 months. If you notice any of the symptoms listed above, see your doctor right away. The Skin Cancer Foundation says that most skin cancer can be cured if it is diagnosed and treated early.

GASOLINE SAFETY

Follow these safety tips from American Burn Association whenever you handle gas:

- ➔ Don't smoke or use matches, lighters, or other ignition sources anywhere around gasoline. Gas vapors can travel far from gasoline containers, especially in enclosed areas.
- ➔ Use gas only in well-ventilated areas.
- ➔ Turn off equipment and let cool before filling the gas tank.
- ➔ Never use gasoline to start charcoal on a grill—use proper charcoal starter.
- ➔ Never use gas as a cleaning fluid or solvent—or to clean your hands.
- ➔ Don't store gas cans in your vehicle.
- ➔ Store gas in approved containers in a cool, well-ventilated area, such as a shed or garage, but never in the house, and only keep a minimum amount on hand.
- ➔ Never re-use glass or plastic bottles for storing gasoline or other flammable or toxic liquids. Use a metal or plastic gasoline container with the proper labels and warnings in place.

Heat Illness Prevention

Follow this advice from Cal-OSHA

- If you are coming back to work from an illness or an extended break or you are just starting a job working in the heat, it is important to be aware that you are more vulnerable to heat stress until your body has time to adjust. Let your employer know you are not used to the heat. It takes about 5 – 7 days for your body to adjust.
- Drinking plenty of water frequently is vital to workers exposed to the heat. An individual may produce as much as 2 to 3 gallons of sweat per day. In order to replenish that fluid the worker should drink 3 to 4 cups of water every hour starting at the beginning of your shift.
- Take your breaks in a cool shaded area and allow time for recovery from the heat during the day. These are effective ways to avoid heat illness.
- Avoid or limit the use of alcohol and caffeine during periods of extreme heat. Both dehydrate the body.
- If you or a co-worker start to feel symptoms such as nausea, dizziness, weakness or unusual fatigue, let your supervisor know and rest in a cool shaded area. If symptoms persist or worsen seek immediate medical attention.
- Whenever possible, wear clothing that provides protection from the sun but allows airflow to the body. Protect your head and shade your eyes if working outdoors.
- When working in the heat be sure to pay extra attention to your co-workers and be sure you know how to call for medical help.