



## ARE YOU HEADED FOR A FALL THIS WINTER?

Who hasn't slipped, tripped or stumbled, it happens to all of us eventually. Slips, trips, and falls constitute the majority of workplace accidents. According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, over 230,000 workers in the United States sustained nonfatal injuries from slips, trips, and falls in a recent year, each resulting in one or more days away from work. Although some of these injuries were only temporarily disabling, others left workers permanently disabled. Most years slips, trips, and falls result in somewhere between 15 percent and 20 percent of all nonfatal workplace injuries, the highest frequency of injury of any single regulated activity.

Many slip, trip or fall injuries occur because people simply are not paying attention. You can do your best to eliminate or control hazards but weather and other environmental factors cannot always be controlled and that's when you have to be on heightened alert to avoid slip, trip and fall incidents. Here is what to watch for and what to do to avoid slip, trip and fall incidents:

- **Hazard:** Obstacles in the walkways.
- **Prevention:** Clean up spills and debris immediately. Store supplies away from walkways and aisles. Remove clutter so as not to create hazards. There should never be any stored items in hallways or on stairs.
- **Hazard:** Wet, slippery surfaces
- **Prevention:** Wear shoes or boots with slip-resistant soles. Slow down and take shorter steps when walking on slippery surfaces. Watch for and be aware of areas where water or ice may accumulate in parking lots and on sidewalks at your school.
- **Hazard:** Drawers and file cabinets left open.
- **Prevention:** Keep an eye out for open drawers and get in the habit of closing drawers and file cabinets when they are not in use.
- **Hazard:** Stairs, ramps and entrances.
- **Prevention:** Use handrails when going up and down stairs and ramps, the handhold can help you maintain balance in the event of a slip or trip. Use the walk off mats at entrances to wipe off your feet before entering a building.
- **Hazard:** Obstructed view
- **Prevention:** Avoid carrying bulky objects you cannot see over. You need to be able to see where you are going!
- **Hazard:** Improper use of ladders or failure to use a ladder when needed
- **Prevention:** Practice ladder safety, particularly the 3 points of contact rule for ladders. Use a stepladder rather than a chair, desk, or air handling unit to reach items on shelves or hang an object on the wall and always face the ladder.

## WATCH YOUR STEP

Talking on your cell phone or answering a text while leaving the school? Reading a report as you walk to your meeting? Watch it, many slip, trip and fall accidents happen when people are trying to do too many things at once. Tripping on curbs, slipping on ice, running into door frames desks and other protruding objects typically occurs when people are distracted or not paying attention.

### Everyday Office Ergonomics

Good ergonomics fits the task to you rather than forcing you to adapt to the task. You want to work in a comfortable, neutral position. Avoid awkward postures and overreaching that can lead to painful conditions such as neck/shoulder tension, eyestrain and wrist or arm pain. Whether you're working on the computer in the office, laptop at home or the iPad on the couch, it may be time for a comfort check. Try to practice these ergonomic best practices as they apply to your situation.

- When sitting at your workstation, your feet should be flat on the floor or supported by a footrest, your seat should not press against the back of your knees or lower legs.
- The top of your monitor should be positioned straight ahead, slightly above eye level and approximately arm's length away from your body. Adjust the distance so you can clearly view the monitor without leaning forward or back.
- When you type, your elbows should be comfortably at your sides, elbow joint at right angles and your forearms parallel to the floor.
- All work materials should be within easy reach, this includes: mouse, keyboard, phone, and documents.
- Your keyboard is positioned so keystroking can be performed with your wrists, hands and fingers in a natural posture, wrists should not be tilted up (extension) or down (flexion) to type.
- Your armrests should not interfere with your movement and should not hold elbows up raising your shoulders.
- Maintain good upright posture, when possible vary your work activities to break from repetitive motions and constant work positions.

### It's Time to Schedule Fall Safety Training

**Teachers:** Slip, Trip, Fall Prevention / Strain & Sprain Prevention

**Building & Grounds:** Material Handling / Strain & Sprain Prevention / Slip, Fall Prevention / Haz Comm GHS Update

**Transportation:** Slip, Trip & Fall Prevention / Strain & Sprain Prevention

**Administration:** Safety Awareness / Safety Responsibilities

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