

Engaging workers in slip, trip and fall prevention

OHS information for employers and supervisors

KEY INFORMATION

- Slips, trips and falls are a primary concern at all workplaces.
- Everyone has a role to play in preventing workplace incidents.

Creating and managing a safe and healthy workplace involves everyone. For workers to be truly engaged in health and safety, they need to know their employers, supervisors, and the organization, value their well-being and input. When workers are encouraged to participate and take ownership in health and safety issues, they are more likely to follow safer work practices and to speak up if they see something amiss or experience a situation in the workplace that may be unhealthy or unsafe.

The potential for slips, trips and falls are everywhere

Slip, trip and fall hazards can occur in various situations such as:

- transition areas between the outside and the inside (uneven or slippery floor surfaces).
- while products are being unloaded (empty pallets, debris or spills).
- while working at heights (using ladders or getting into or out of a vehicle).
- while going from one part of the workplace to another (between 47 and 52 per cent of all fall-related injuries are from a fall to the floor, walkway or other surface).

Make sure the fundamentals are in place

Use the following tools, resources, and information to help ensure you have these essentials in place:

- a work site policy that clearly outlines the work site rules for housekeeping, lighting and inspections.
- personal protective equipment (can include footwear, handrails, fall restraint or arrest equipment) and other equipment (ladders, lifting devices) that is in good repair and workers are trained to use properly.

- training on: how to clean up spills, WHMIS, the proper use of fall protection equipment, the use of guardrails, ensuring openings are covered, etc.
- follow-up to make sure that the work site rules are being followed, and to identify what can be improved.
- an incident investigation process that looks at root causes of slips, trips and falls, and how to eliminate them.

Worth another look

Consider setting up a task group or individual responsible to initiate or support any or all of the activities below. Try to rotate workers through to engage as many workers as possible, and minimize individual time commitment.

- Review the workplace's injury history with respect to slips, trips and falls. Where have you had near misses? What does this tell you about where incidents occur and which tasks carry the greatest risks? Share results with workers.
- Conduct risk assessments, and get the health and safety committee / health and safety representative(s) involved.
- Have supervisors start conversations with workers. Encourage workers to come forward with specific concerns and solutions.
- Include seasonal risks. For example, muddy and slippery walkways and parking lots, or pools of melted snow in transition areas.
- Link identified risks to policies and practices dealing with housekeeping, uneven surfaces, wet or slippery surfaces, obstructed vision, and protective clothing and devices. Adjust as required - for example, use a pallet tripping incident as an example, to ensure you have a designated area for empty pallets and other debris.
- Raise awareness. Use posters, safety talks, demonstrations, and more to keep slips, trips and falls health and safety top of mind.
- Clearly communicate the hazard reporting process. Encourage reporting and take immediate action to correct the problem.

- Identify causes of unsafe behaviours (e.g. rushing down stairs, distractions, overreaching from fatigue).
- Is the message that 'productivity' is more important than health and safety? Are you communicating your policies and practices effectively? Are supervisors adequately enforcing your practices?
- Conduct and normalize workplace housekeeping and footwear inspections.
- Recognize workers who actively contribute to slip, trip and fall prevention. Post their contribution on a safety board, add it to meeting agendas or special presentations, and publish it in company newsletters.

About the OHS Prevention Initiative

The [OHS Prevention Initiative](#) is a partnership between the Alberta government, employers, workers, health and safety associations, labour organizations, service providers (consultants, trainers and auditors) and WCB-Alberta. Its aim is preventing workplace injury and illness.

Contributors to this resource

Alberta Construction Safety Association
 Alberta Forest Products Association
 Alberta Hotel and Lodging Association
 Alberta Motor Transport Association
 Alberta Municipal Health and Safety Association
 AgSafe Alberta
 Continuing Care Safety Association
 Energy Safety Canada
 Ledcor Group of Companies

For more information

Guide to occupational health and safety: Employer
ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li009

Prevention Initiative slips, trips, and falls
ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/slips-trips-and-falls

Other resources

WCB-Alberta – Worker handbook
wcb.ab.ca/assets/pdfs/workers/worker_handbook.pdf

WCB-Alberta – Forms and guides
wcb.ab.ca/resources/for-employers/forms-and-guides/

Government of Alberta OHS resource portal
ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/

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