



Slips, Trips and Falls

Upon review of the most recent Hazard ID, Near Miss and Injury reports across the Shaw Group, **Trips** is the most common incident sub type identified in our EHSInsight reporting. Unfortunately, our most recent recordable injury was the due to a trip and fall and resulted in an injury to an employee's wrist. To work on reducing the number of NM and Injuries we are having involving Slips and Trips, we need to continue to focus on reducing the hazardous situations putting people at risk.

Based on data from the Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS), Statistics show that the majority (67%) of falls happen on the same level resulting from slips and trips. The remaining 30% are falls from a height. Below will discuss conditions that contribute to Slips Trips and Falls and more importantly, how to prevent them.

SLIPS

Slips happen where there is too little friction or traction between the footwear and the walking surface. Common causes of slips are:

- wet or oily surfaces
- occasional spills
- weather hazards
- loose, unanchored rugs or mats
- flooring or other walking surfaces that do not have the same degree of traction in all areas

TRIPS

Trips happen when your foot collides (strikes, hits) an object causing you to lose balance and, eventually fall. Common causes of tripping are:

- obstructed view
- poor lighting
- clutter in your way
- wrinkled carpeting
- uncovered cables
- bottom drawers not being closed
- uneven (steps, thresholds) walking surfaces

Now, the very important part – How to Prevent Falls Due to Slips and Trips!

Both slips and trips result from unintended or unexpected change in the contact between the feet and the ground or walking surface. This fact shows that good housekeeping, quality of walking surfaces (flooring), selection of proper footwear, and appropriate pace of walking are critical for preventing fall incidents.

Housekeeping

Good housekeeping is the first and the most important (fundamental) level of preventing falls due to slips and trips. It includes:

- cleaning all spills immediately
- marking spills and wet areas
- mopping or sweeping debris from floors
- removing obstacles from walkways and always keeping walkways free of clutter
- securing (tacking, taping, etc.) mats, rugs and carpets that do not lay flat
- always closing file cabinet or storage drawers
- covering cables that cross walkways
- keeping working areas and walkways well lit
- replacing used light bulbs and faulty switches

Without good housekeeping practices, any other preventive measures such as installation of sophisticated flooring, specialty footwear or training on techniques of walking and safe falling will never be fully effective.

Flooring

Changing or modifying walking surfaces is the next level of preventing slip and trips. Recoating or replacing floors, installing mats, pressure-sensitive abrasive strips or abrasive-filled paint-on coating and metal or synthetic decking can further improve safety and reduce the risk of falling. However, it is critical to remember that high-tech flooring requires good housekeeping as much as any other flooring. In addition, resilient, non-slippery flooring prevents or reduces foot fatigue and contributes to slip-prevention measures.

Footwear

In workplaces where floors may be oily or wet or where workers spend considerable time outdoors, prevention of fall incidents should focus on selecting proper footwear. Since there is no footwear with anti-slip properties for every condition, consultation with manufacturers is highly recommended.

Properly fitting footwear increases comfort and prevents fatigue which, in turn, improves safety for the employee.