

4. Keep *both* hands free for balance, rather than in your pockets.
5. Wear shoes with slip-resistant soles, or studded shoe pullovers for walking on icy surfaces.
6. Use side-walks/walkways that have been cleared of ice and snow.



slips, trips, and falls, contact your campus Environmental Health & Safety office.

Using the Stairs

1. Use the handrail from start to finish.
2. Avoid carrying loads on stairways-or only carry loads that you can see over.
3. Keep your eyes on where you're going and descend stairs slowly to keep your balance and identify tripping hazards.
4. Test potentially slippery stairs by tapping them with your foot.
5. Going up or down, keep weight on your back leg until your front foot is safely on the next step. This maintains your center of gravity.



Most slips and trips can be prevented if you know what to look for and take action to reduce the risk and eliminate the hazards before someone is injured. If you don't, the result can be potentially serious workers' compensation injuries and costly lawsuits.

Getting Assistance

For more information about preventing



Environmental Health & Safety

P.O. Box 641172
 Pullman, WA 99164-1172
 (509) 335-3041

Wenatchee.... 509-663-8181
 Tri-Cities 509-372-7163
 Vancouver..... 360-546-9706
 Spokane..... 509-368-6699

<http://www.ehs.wsu.edu>

Environmental Health and Safety

Consulting Training Service



Avoiding Slips, Trips, & Falls



World Class. Face to Face.

Think Safety. Act Safely!

Slips, Trips, and Falls

They can result from sitting in a chair improperly, walking without adequate lights, or falling over a box or off a ladder. Hazards that can lead to slips, trips, and falls are often overlooked even though they cause many injuries, ranging from minor cuts and sprains to disabling injuries.

Although slip, trip, and fall hazards are easily created, they are also easy to correct. Be a "hazard look-out" to recognize and correct hazards quickly, before the next person becomes a victim.

Slip Hazards

A slip occurs when there is too little friction or traction between the footwear and the walking surface. Some common causes of slips are:

- slippery floor surfaces
- liquid, moisture, or ice on the floor
- food, trash, or small objects on the floor
- oil or grease on the floor
- footwear that does not have nonskid soles.



Trip Hazards

A trip occurs when a person's foot contacts an object or drops to a lower level unexpectedly and they are thrown off balance. Some of the more common causes of tripping are:

- furniture that creates obstacles
- materials stored in passageways,

- aisles, and stairways
- electrical or telephone cords that cross passageways and aisles
- hazardous floor conditions such as protruding nails, holes, or loose boards
- loose, ripped, or bunched carpets and rugs
- desk or file cabinet drawers left open when they are no longer being used
- objects protruding into passageways and aisles
- floor level changes or hidden steps that may not be obvious
- unsafe stairway conditions or use
- elevator cars that do not level off at the same height of the floor it stopped at
- insufficient lighting for walking or working areas.



Fall Hazards

In addition to falls as a result of slips and trips, you may be injured if you fall from an elevation. Some causes of falls are:

- using "makeshift" items (boxes, buckets, chairs, etc.) to gain more height
- not sitting on "4-square" of their chairs
- carrying large or too many items that prevents seeing where they are going
- jumping from one level to another.



Preventing Injuries

Good housekeeping is one of the most important methods for preventing falls due to slips and trips. It includes:

- cleaning up all spills immediately,
- marking spills and wet areas,
- mopping or sweeping debris from floors,
- removing obstacles from walkways and always keeping them 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.



Walking on Slippery Surfaces

1. Take small steps-shorter than your foot length-to keep your center of balance under you.
2. Walk with your toes pointed outward-which provides a wider, more stable base of support for maintaining balance.
3. Turn gradually-a sharp turn results in a sideways force that can cause loss of balance and a fall.