



# Keep An Eye Out for Slip, Trip and Fall Hazards



## 5 Minute Safety Talk

### Slips, trips and falls are definitely no laughing matter.

In fact, following highway crashes, falls to a lower level are the second leading cause of preventable workplace fatalities according to *Injury Facts*®, 2017 Edition. Compared to falls to a lower level, falls on the same level tend to result in less severe, but more frequent injuries – more than 155,000 in 2014. With so much potential for harm, we should do everything possible to recognize fall hazards to prevent injuries from occurring.

### View the World from a Safety Lens

The truth is that hazards are all around us. Sometimes it is difficult to see them, especially when we are working in familiar conditions. Instead of going through our usual routines, we should always stay vigilant and keep an eye out for safety. It could be as simple as noticing a tear in the carpeting, a box sticking out into a walkway or a spill on the floor.

While noticing something out of the ordinary is the first step, you must also know how to report a hazard in your organization. Perhaps you could clean up some water on the floor yourself, but stop and think – where is the water coming from? Is there a leaking ice machine in the break room? Your safety and facilities teams may need to step in. Or let's say it is a rainy day and people are tracking in water to the tile floor. Perhaps your organization needs to install a slip resistant mat or runner in the entryway. Don't just walk by and assume someone else will see a hazard or address it. You can be the catalyst to make these changes happen – you just need to keep your eyes open, think about the bigger picture and let someone know about your concerns.

### Here are some other tips to help prevent falls to the same level:

- Don't hurry or walk too fast
- Watch where you are walking – even in familiar areas
- Avoid distractions like cell phones or reading while walking
- Wear proper footwear
- Look out for changes in elevation
- Don't obstruct your vision by carrying a large package – ask for help if needed
- Clean up spills immediately
- Pay attention to weather conditions

### Prevent Falls from Heights

While not as common as falls to the same level, falls from heights are often deadlier. Fatal falls to a lower level typically involve injuries to the head or multiple body parts. Overall, about half of fatal falls to a lower level occur at heights of 20 feet or less, while 16 percent occur at heights of greater than 30 feet, according to *Injury Facts*, 2017 Edition.

### Here are some tips to help prevent falls from heights:

- Be sure a job hazard analysis has been conducted and a fall protection plan is in place before beginning your work
- Wear the proper fall protection equipment for the job and be trained in how to use it
- Make sure fall prevention systems are in place, such as guardrails
- When using a ladder, maintain three points of contact at all times
- Do not use ladders outdoors in windy or inclement weather, and if the weather turns while you are on the ladder, descend immediately
- Place the base of the ladder on a firm, solid surface – never make your own "improvised" scaffolding

You can visit [safety.nsc.org/fall-from-heights](http://safety.nsc.org/fall-from-heights) for more specific tips on falls from heights from the NSC Construction & Utilities Division.

Remember, if you fall, even if it is just a minor slip, please report it. Being involved in a fall doesn't make you "clumsy," and it is nothing to be ashamed of. Reporting every hazard and near miss can help to prevent something similar – or worse – from happening to someone else. Think about at least one change you can make today to help prevent yourself, or a coworker, from falling.



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# Prevent Slips, Trips and Falls



We may not consider slipping at home or tripping on the sidewalk to be serious risks, but they can be deadly. Falls are the third leading cause of unintentional-injury-related deaths for all ages and the number one cause of death for those 65 and older, according to [injuryfacts.nsc.org](http://injuryfacts.nsc.org).

## How to Prevent Falls

Take these simple steps to prevent falls both at home and in your community:

- Remove clutter, including electrical cords and other tripping hazards, from walkways, stairs and doorways
- Install nightlights in the bathroom, hallways and other areas to prevent tripping and falls at night
- Always wear proper footwear and clean up spills immediately
- Place non-slip adhesive strips on stairs and non-skid mats in the shower and bathroom
- For older adults, install grab bars near showers and toilets, and install rails on both sides of stairs – older adults can also take balance classes, get their vision and hearing checked each year and talk with their doctors and pharmacist about fall risks from medication



## Distracted Walking – A Serious Risk

Today, nearly everyone has a cell phone and consequently distracted walking has become a serious risk. One study, published in the *Journal of Safety Research*, found that over a 10-year period, distracted walking was responsible for more than 10,000 serious injuries.

### To limit this risk:

- Avoid cell phone use while walking, especially near crosswalks – talk with your friends and loved ones about this risk as well
- Pay special attention in busy areas, such as airports and shopping centers, and even your own house – more than half of distracted walking incidents happen at home
- Avoid other distracted walking risks, such as listening to headphones, when walking near intersections and other busy areas
- When driving, look carefully for pedestrians distracted by their phones – slow down and pay special attention in school zones



**1 step for safety:** Avoid looking at or using your phone while walking. If you need to use your phone, find a safe area to stop walking and remain in place until you are finished.



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# FALLS



## The 4 A's of Fall Prevention

### To Keep Safe



#### ASK yourself before beginning your work:

- Is a fall protection plan in place?
- Are you trained in and using proper fall protection equipment?
- Are fall prevention systems like guardrails in place?
- Are you maintaining three points of ladder contact at all times?
- Are you working on a ladder outdoors in windy or inclement weather? Don't!
- Is the base of the ladder on a firm, solid surface?
- If on scaffolding, does it meet OSHA's scaffolding standard?

#### Be AWARE

Keep an eye out for possible hazards:

- Tears in the carpeting
- Spills on the floor
- Obstacles blocking a walkway
- Clutter on stairs
- Cords trailing on the floor



#### ADDRESS the hazard

Don't assume someone else is taking care of it:

- Make sure there's adequate lighting
- Clean up manageable spills
- Find out what's causing it and report
- Alert whomever is in charge



#### ALWAYS keep safety top of mind:

- Don't walk too fast
- Don't carry anything that obstructs your view
- Watch where you're going – even in familiar areas
- Avoid distractions like cell phones
- Wear proper footwear
- Use ladders to reach heights—never boxes or chairs
- Look out for changes in elevation
- Take care when ground is wet or icy
- Report every fall, even minor slips



Falls to a lower level is the second leading cause of preventable workplace fatalities.

SOURCE: Injury Facts® (Injuryfacts.nsc.org)

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For more information on this and other safety topics, visit the member-exclusive website at [nsc.org](http://nsc.org)

SOURCE: National Safety Council 5 Minute Safety Talks, "Falls"



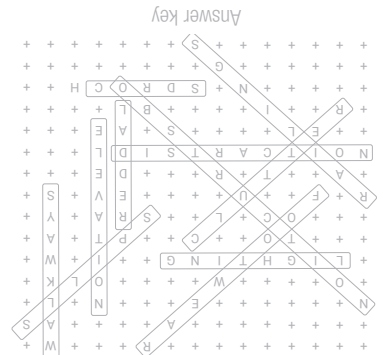
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# FALL PREVENTION WORD SEARCH

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- CORDS
- CLUTTER
- DISTRACTION
- ELEVATION
- FOOTWEAR
- LADDER
- LIGHTING
- OBSTRUCTION
- RAILINGS
- SPILLS
- WALKWAYS



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