

# **Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls**

## **A SAFETY TALK FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS**

This safety talk is designed for discussion leaders to use in preparing safety meetings.

Set a specific time and date for your safety meeting. Publicize your meeting so everyone involved will be sure to attend.

Review this safety talk before the meeting and become familiar with its content. Make notes about the points made in this talk that pertain to your workplace. You should be able to present the material in your own words and lead the discussion without reading it.

Seating space is not absolutely necessary, but arrangements should be made so that those attending can easily see and hear the presentation.

Collect whatever materials and props you will need ahead of time. Try to use equipment in your workplace to demonstrate your points.

## **DURING THE MEETING**

Give the safety talk in your own words. Use the printed talk merely as a guide.

The purpose of a safety meeting is to initiate discussion of safety problems and provide solutions to those problems. Encourage employees to discuss hazards or potential hazards they encounter on the job. Ask them to suggest ways to improve safety in their area.

Don't let the meeting turn into a gripe session about unrelated topics. As discussion leader, it's your job to make sure the topic is safety. Discussing other topics wastes time and can ruin the effectiveness of your safety meeting.

At the end of the meeting, ask employees to sign a sheet on the back of this talk as a record that they attended the safety meeting. Keep this talk on file for your records.

**Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls**

We have all heard examples about the seriousness of slips and falls in our business. They happen suddenly. They're totally unexpected. And the result of a slip or fall can be a painful and possibly permanent injury that could change your entire life.

Most of these accidents result from slips or trips that happen at floor level, rather than from high places. About 75 percent of these slips and trips occur on walking surfaces, such as floors, stairs and sidewalks.

Basically, slips and falls can happen almost anywhere and can be caused by a number of things. Trying to catch your balance when you slip, for example, can pull muscles, tear ligaments and cause permanent damage to your back, even if you avoid falling down.

Standing on a bumper to clean your windshield is an open invitation for a bad slip or fall. Be especially careful of your footing on ladders attached to trucks and catwalks, and always face the ladder when climbing or descending.

Most trips, slips and falls are the result of unsure footing. They can occur on any surface that is covered with mud, snow, water, oil, ice, grease or any other slippery substance. So whenever you see spilled liquid on a dock or garage floor, clean it up immediately.

When entering or getting out of a cab, footing stability can be jeopardized.

Always face the cab when going in or out, and use the handgrips.

Mats, rugs and runners are also hazardous if they can slip or slide, or are torn, curled up or loose.

Uneven or defective surfaces, littered floors, telephone wires and electrical cords, open drawers or anything else that projects from the walking surface may cause a fall.

Stairways present another tripping problem, whether they're a poorly lighted set inside a building or steps outside from the road to the dock. Material, cartons, boxes or other items should not be stored on stairs.

Proper lighting, without glare, shadows or violent contrasts between floor areas, and the condition of workers' shoes are also important.

**Falls can be prevented by remembering:**

- Not to climb over freight or use it as a makeshift platform.
- Not to jump off docks or trucks.

- To carry only what you can reasonably handle and keep your balance.
- To stay alert and always expect the unexpected at all levels.

Be careful. Watch your step. Report all hazardous conditions to your supervisor immediately, unless you can take care of them. The important thing is not to let slips and falls put you down.