



SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS: *Using Improper Footwear on Same-Level Surfaces*

In our workplace, we tend to walk from place to place, giving very little thought as to how we'll get there, what obstacles we may encounter or what may be on the floor that can cause us to slip, trip or fall. Every year, slips, trips and falls rank at or near the top as one of the leading causes of injuries at work, in our home or while we're participating in our favorite hobby. Throughout the School District, slips, trips and falls are the 2nd most common cause of injury to employees, most of them known to be occurring "On Same Level."

Let's take a closer look at a few potential causes:

- **Unsafe floor surfaces** – broken floor tiles, missing floor drain covers, or rolled-up carpeting
- **Unclean floor surfaces** – spilled water (where's the source?), dirt/grease flying from equipment or machinery, poor housekeeping practices
- **Improper footwear** – smooth/slippery soles, open-toed shoes, worn out shoes, untied shoe laces, leather soles, etc.
- **Inadequate hazard identification** – A floor with a sudden change of elevation, broken floor drain, unguarded floor channel, heaved sidewalk due to ice/snow conditions, etc.
- **Insufficient training** – All employees should be trained on hazard recognition and guidelines regarding footwear, floor maintenance and reporting unsafe conditions.



Tips for Preventing Slip, Trip and Fall Injuries

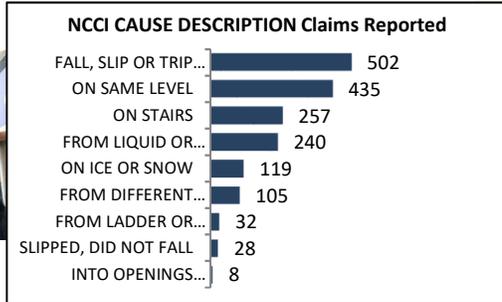
Did you know that in the United States, 50% of slip, trip or fall injuries are caused by unsafe, unclean floor surfaces? Following are some helpful tips for preventing these types of injuries:

- Always pay attention to what is going on around you.
- Plan your route, anticipate potential hazards and avoid/eliminate them.
- Don't make sudden turns or stops.
- Move cautiously near corners, especially when carrying things.
- Be aware of any blind corners, problem floor surfaces, or other hazardous areas.

In the School District, there were 435 slips, trips, and falls in the last five (5) years that occurred "On Same Level" due to unsafe and/or unclean floor surfaces.

School District of Philadelphia
Fall or Slip Causes

Valuation Date: April 30, 2021 (2016-2021)



Here are a few common injury scenarios reported by School District employees:

“I slipped and fell on waxed floors.”

“When dumping a trash can, I slipped and fell.”

“I stepped on a bolt and fell when entering the building.”

“I stepped over a board and slipped in the mud and fell.”

“While walking into the building, I stepped on trash and fell.”

Based on the scenarios above, can you think of ways to prevent common slip, trip, fall injuries?

Additional Tips for Prevention:

- 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.



Slip-Resistant Footwear

Employees who work in potentially slippery higher-risk areas must wear slip-resistant footwear. When selecting slip-resistant footwear, the following should be considered:

- Level of slip-resistance (i.e. Polyurethane and microcellular urethane soles are more slip-resistant compared to nitrile and styrene rubber).
- Tread design, tread hardness, and shape of sole and heel (i.e. High elastic soles with raised-tread and cross-hatch patterns are more slip-resistant than rough and flat soles. Tread patterns should cover the whole sole and heel area.)
- Proper support and comfort.

Dress for Your Day

When it comes to choosing the proper footwear to prevent falls, your choice may change based on a few factors.

- **Where are you going?** Strive to have the safest footwear for your work environment, whether that's steel-toed boots or comfortable shoes with good grip. If you frequently change environments, walking inside and outside or from an office to a shop floor, plan ahead so you have the footwear you need.
- **What is the weather like?** On a snowy or rainy day, boots are the best option to get you safely from the parking lot to inside. If needed, consider bringing an alternate pair of shoes to wear during the day. If you work outside, make sure your footwear is sturdy enough to handle all potential environments and terrains you will encounter.
- **Be ready to evacuate a worksite** quickly should an emergency situation arise. Your footwear can play a role in how fast that can be done.

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