Slips, trips and falls are among the leading causes of injuries resulting in workers missing time at work in Ontario. Preventing such injuries is a key goal of every safe and healthy workplace. Employers must:

- Provide information and instruction to workers on slip, trip and fall hazards.
- Encourage workers to report slip, trip and fall hazards.
- Identify and assess the risk of job-specific slip, trip and fall hazards.
- Establish controls to eliminate or reduce workers’ exposure to slip, trip and fall hazards.
- Ensure the control measures are working.

This fact sheet is intended to help employers, workers and other workplace parties:

- Understand slip, trip and fall hazards.
- Implement occupational health and safety policies.
- Develop and maintain programs to prevent workplace injuries.

Common hazards

Consider the following slip, trip and fall hazards in your workplace:

- slippery surfaces (oily or greasy, etc.)
- seasonal slip, trip and fall hazards (snow and ice)
- spills of wet or dry substances
- changes in walkway levels and slopes
- unsecured mats
- unsafe use of ladders
- poor lighting
- falls from beds of trucks, trailers or loads
- debris and cables in walkways
- smoke, steam or dust obscuring view
- lack of guardrails on mezzanines and balconies
- unsuitable footwear
- poorly maintained equipment (ladders, fall arrest, etc.)
Controlling hazards

When a hazard has been identified, the employer must take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect workers. Employers must provide information, instruction and supervision to workers to protect their health and safety.

Consider the following when establishing safe work practices for your workplace:

- characteristics of physical work area
- weather conditions (snow, ice, rain, etc.)
- tasks performed
- workers’ work practices
- tasks performed

Control measures for slip, trip and fall hazards may include:

Engineering controls

- slip-resistant flooring and slip-resistant mats
- slope of surface (ramps, handrails)
- surface free of obstructions/holes
- appropriate drainage
- adequate lighting (minimize glare and contrast)
- minimize environmental influences (blocking wind, preventing wet surfaces from icing, etc.)
- guardrails for raised floors, mezzanines and balconies
- sound footing for ladders and work platforms

Administrative controls

- provide wet floor signage
- train workers to prevent slips, trips and falls
- establish safe work practices
- communicate a procedure for reporting hazards
- ensure prompt maintenance
- design jobs to minimize tasks requiring excessive pushing/pulling, line-of-sight obstruction and over-reaching
- ensure shovels, mops and buckets are readily available
- correct poor work practices
- conduct Joint Health and Safety Committee monthly inspections
- review slips, trips and same-level fall incidents

Safe work practices

- clean up spills promptly
- remove debris, snow and ice
- routinely clean floors with appropriate solutions
- use two hands to climb/descend ladders
- maintain three-point contact on ladders
- clean castors on wheeled carts
- remove clutter from walking surfaces
- clean grease build-up from slip resistant mats

Personal protective equipment

- Select appropriate footwear based on a risk assessment of the job task.
- Wear proper-fitting footwear that may include slip-resistant soles.
- Properly select, use and maintain fall protection equipment.

All workers have the right to work in a safe and healthy environment. A strong workplace health and safety culture requires all workplace parties to adhere to the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and its regulations. This includes paying constant and appropriate attention to workplace health and safety issues.
More information

- Ministry of Labour:
  www.ontario.ca/healthandsafetyatwork

- Ministry of Labour, Spot the Fall Hazards Tools:
  www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/tools/

- Ministry of Labour, Stop Falls:
  www.ontario.ca/stopfalls

- Ontario’s Health and Safety Associations:
  healthandsafetyontario.ca/

- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS):
  www.ccohs.ca/

Toll-free number

Call 1-877-202-0008 any time to report critical injuries, fatalities or work refusals. Call between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday to Friday for general inquiries about workplace health and safety.

Always call 911 in an emergency.

Note: This document is not intended to replace the OHSA or the regulations and reference should always be made to the official version of the legislation. It is the responsibility of the workplace parties to ensure compliance with the legislation. This document does not constitute legal advice. To determine your rights and obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations, please contact your legal counsel or refer to the legislation at www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90o01_e.htm.