Slips, Trips and Falls – On-the-Job Safety Basics

We often don’t take falls very seriously. However, falls often cause injury and lost time from work...and can even be fatal. Occupational falls cause more than 1,500 deaths per year along with approximately 300,000 injuries.

Physical forces at work in a fall:

**Friction** is the resistance between things (i.e. your shoes and the surface you walk on).

**Momentum** is affected by speed and size of the moving object. “The bigger they are, the harder they fall.”

**Gravity** is the force that pulls you to the ground once a fall is in process. Your body has automatic systems for keeping its balance. Your eyes, ears and muscles all work to keep your body close to its natural center of balance. A fall is likely when your center of balance shifts too far and cannot be restored.

Prevention measures:
- Practice safe walking skills. If you must walk on wet/icy surfaces, take short steps to keep your center of balance under you and point your feet slightly outward (i.e. like a penguin).
- Clean up all spills right away.
- Wear the right shoes.