Slips, Trips and Falls

What Causes People to Fall?
- Friction
- Momentum
- Gravity

Slips
There are several potential causes of slips:
- Loss of balance caused by too little friction
- Loss of traction
- Wet surfaces
- Thresholds (change in floor surfaces)
- Spills
- Weather hazards
- Loose or unanchored rugs/mats

What can we do to prevent slips?
- Practice safe walking skills.
- Use designated, marked walkways.
  - If you have to walk on a wet floor:
    - Slow down;
    - Shorten your stride;
    - Point your toes out slightly; and
    - Make wide turns.
  - When walking in rain or slush:
    - Wear shoes that provide added traction.
    - Carry work shoes and change in the office.
- Clean up spills or leaks as soon as you notice them, especially around entrances and exits.
- Keep grease off shop floors.
- Designate safe storage areas for chemicals, tools and equipment.
- Keep potentially hazardous items in storage when not in use.
- Be cautious on smooth surfaces.
- Use appropriate footwear.
- Increase friction between shoes and walking surface.
- Proper footwear selection.
- When outdoors:
  - Maintain designated walkways in parking lots.
  - Keep well lit.
  - Fix potholes and uneven walking surfaces.
  - Instruct workers where to park and walk in or out of buildings.
Trips
How does a trip occur?
• Worker’s foot hits an object
• Balance is thrown off
• Creates momentum to fall

What are some of the potential causes of a trip?
• Cluttered work areas
• Poor lighting
• Change in floor surfaces (carpet to tile)
• Area has loose footing
• Worker is in a hurry
• Worker in inattentive
• Wrinkled carpeting
• Uncovered cables
• Bottom drawers not being closed
• Uneven walking surfaces

How can we attempt to prevent a trip?
• Take extra care when walking from carpeted to smooth, hard surfaces.
• Take your time and watch where you are going.
• Never leave file cabinet drawers open.
• Secure loose carpeting and cut loose threads.
• Never run power cords under carpet.
• Ensure you can see over the load you are carrying.
• Ensure adequate lighting.
• Keep work areas free of clutter/litter.
• Keep furniture out of walkways/traffic areas.
• Tape down extension cords/keep out of walkways.
• Eliminate loose footing on stairs, steps, floors.
• Properly store ramps and gangplanks in loading dock areas.
• Mopping or sweeping debris from floors.

Falls
A fall is the potential end result of slipping or tripping. Injuries from a fall can be extremely serious, even fatal, and range from bumps and bruises to broken fingers, arms, hips, backs and fractured skulls.

What are some causes of a fall?
• Person moves too far away from center of balance
• Makeshift ladders
• Misuse of ladders
• Poor climbing habits
• Improper scaffolding use
How can we help prevent a fall?

- Ensure adequate lighting.
- Repair or report loose or broken stairs, handrails.
- Don’t use stairs/aisles as storage areas.
- When on the stairs:
  - Use handrails whenever possible;
  - Walk up and down stairs – don’t run; and
  - Ensure you can see over the load you are carrying.

- Report any unsafe condition(s), including broken:
  - Stair treads
  - Floorboards
  - Handrails

Safety Tips for Ladders and Scaffolding

- Don’t use makeshift ladders.
- Piling up boxes, chairs, benches.
- Inspect ladders before use.
- Missing or broken rungs.
- Face the ladder when climbing.
- Use both hands on ladders.
- Hoist materials up to you.
- Keep your center of balance on ladder.
- Adjust position of ladder – don’t overreach.
- Use the four-to-one rule.
- For every foot up, have three inches out.
- One person at a time on a ladder.
- Don’t stand on top step of ladder.
- Stay away from ladders to avoid falling objects.
- Check scaffolding daily for defects.
- Clear work surfaces of snow, ice, slippery material.
- Respect the load limits of scaffolds.
- Lock wheels/casters on mobile scaffolding.
- Use proper PPE.