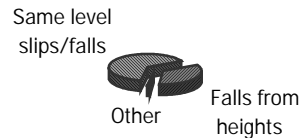


## Slips and Falls

### Slips and Falls

- In 2000 to 2001, 20 workers died falling at work.
- One in every six lost time injuries (LTI), in Ontario, is caused by a fall.
- 80 people are injured every day in a fall at work, that's one every 20 minutes.



**Same-level slips and falls account for 65% of all fall injuries**

**Falls from heights account for 34% of all fall injuries.**

### Steps to reducing fall hazards

#### Step One: Recognize that you can prevent falls and identify where the potential for them exists.

Slips happen when there is too little traction between footwear and the walking surface or walking surfaces are irregular. Falls occur from one level to a lower level. People have made WSIB claims for falling over a hose on the floor, from a lift truck, down stairs, off a loading dock, from a two-foot high stool, while climbing a dumpster and from 38 feet while climbing a ladder. Take preventive measures even on small or short duration jobs.

Correct housekeeping hazards.

- ◆ wet or oily surfaces
- ◆ occasional spills
- ◆ loose, unanchored scatter rugs or mats
- ◆ clutter
- ◆ obstructions

Correct conditions that can cause hazards.

- ◆ flooring that is slippery or has irregular surfaces, (ridges, steps, thresholds)
- ◆ hazards caused by weather conditions
- ◆ poor lighting or visibility
- ◆ open manholes or openings in floors due to construction or repairs being done in buildings

Provide, maintain and properly use equipment/devices to help avoid falls

- ◆ ladders
- ◆ scaffolds
- ◆ guard rails and barriers even on temporary worksites
- ◆ man lift equipment

Provide, maintain and properly wear personal protective equipment (PPE)

- ◆ Fall arrest
- ◆ Other PPE should not pose a visibility hazard

Establish safe work practices

- ◆ Pace of work
- ◆ Proper use of PPE
- ◆ Complete training

### Step Two: Assess fall hazards and set standards and expectations

Assess the degree of risk of the suspected or identified fall hazard, by

- doing a detailed inspection of work areas
- having trained individuals observe worker behaviour
- investigating 'near misses'
- interviewing workers
- reviewing records of prior slips and falls, such as first-aid records or minutes of joint health and safety meetings
- setting or comparing to company and legal standards for slip/fall hazards

Every workplace should have workplace standards, expectations, and rules that consider industry and regulatory guidelines. All staff need to know about them and that they are enforced. This way a company has a baseline against which results of their ongoing assessments can be compared. When people maintain workstations and work areas at company standards, staff are trained in safe work practices, and staff are monitored to ensure they follow safe work practices, falls are preventable.

### Step Three: Control hazards by eliminating or reducing risk

A company can control hazards if it

- sets an expectation that each worker has a role and responsibility to help prevent slips and falls
- communicates the expectation to all staff
- sets the highest standards for housekeeping, lighting and visibility standards
- identifies and reinforces the supervisor's role to enforce standards
- ensures standards for preventing potential causes of slips and falls are met
- provides equipment that is in good repair and is used properly
- makes workers aware of slip and fall hazards
- trains workers how to avoid slips and falls, themselves and for other workers.

When it is impossible to eliminate a hazard and personal protective equipment is essential, you should:

- review regulations that apply to your industry and your company, ensuring that physical restraints, tie-off, working at height regulations and others are followed
- become informed on the availability of fall arrest equipment, the way to properly use it and how to maintain it
- prepare an emergency response plan that is specific to the worksite in the event a worker becomes suspended by their fall arrest equipment or in the event of emergency such as fire or weather conditions.

### *Workplace Safety and Insurance Board*

Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) plays a key role in the province's occupational health and safety system. Funded by employers, the WSIB is one of the top 10 disability insurers in North America. In addition to a strong prevention mandate, the WSIB provides insurance for injuries and illnesses incurred in workplaces covered under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act* and supports early and safe return to work for injured workers.

For more information, contact the WSIB's Prevention Hotline at 416-344-1016 or 1-800-663-6639. This information is available in several languages by calling our information hotline at 416-344-4999, toll-free 1-800-465-5606 or Telephone Service for the Deaf (TTY): 1-800-387-0050