

# April 2019

McMaster's Workplace Wellbeing Newsletter focuses on the promotion of health, safety and wellness. Inquiries and feedback about any of the information in this newsletter may be sent to [ehss@mcmaster.ca](mailto:ehss@mcmaster.ca). This newsletter can also be provided in an accessible format upon request.

Workplace  
Wellbeing  
e-Newsletter



## **Environmental and Occupational Health Support Services (EOHSS)**

A team of health, safety & risk management specialists committed to supporting the University's commitment to creativity, innovation and excellence, and strives to achieve these standards in the areas of environmental and occupational health, safety, loss prevention and mitigation.

## **Employee Health Support Services (EHS)**

A team that provides programs & services to help employees lead healthier lives, in and out of the workplace. We are committed to supporting employees in a healthy & safe return to work following an injury or illness, facilitating workplace accommodations & fostering healthy work environments.

## **Organizational Development**

A team that offers a supportive working environment through strong employee engagement, employee recognition & wellness. We also encourage individuals to enhance their personal and professional growth by recognizing that our employees and partners are our most valuable assets.



## We are all Leaders in Safety Safety and Health Week (formerly NAOSH Week)

Our team is excited to promote Safety and Health Week. We will be offering a number of sessions throughout the week to interest the broader McMaster community including our annual BBQ and Vendor Fair in recognition of Safety and Health Week taking place **May 6th to 10th**.

All members of the McMaster community are invited to create a brief, 2-3 minute video presentation that highlights a risk-related topic within their specific work environment or on campus in general. You may wish to incorporate this year's McMaster theme, '**We are all Leaders in Safety**'. Videos will be judged on creativity, message content and quality. All submissions will be posted on the EOHSS website and the winning video will be presented during the May 8th Barbecue & Vendor Fair at McMaster's 2019 Safety and Health Week. **Submissions are due by Monday, April 29th 2019**. The contest will also include the awarding of monetary prizes. We look forward to your participation.



There is still time to submit a  
risk-related video as part of the  
Safety and Health Week Video  
Competition  
[Click here for details](#)

# Safety and Health Week - Sessions offered

## Psychological Health and Safety

**Monday, May 6**

**12 noon to 1 p.m. | Mills Library, Connection Centre, Room L113**

A psychologically safe and healthy workplace promotes emotional well-being, and presents minimal risk to employee mental health. By making changes to our workplace environment, and offering support to employees, we can support a psychologically healthy work environment.

This interactive orientation to Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace is a free training program for departments, teams, managers or employees. The goal is to introduce individuals to the 13 psychosocial workplace factors from the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace. More importantly, the program demonstrates what workplace factors can impact employee mental health and what we can all do to support ourselves and others in the workplace.

[Click here](#) to register.

## Factors in Longevity

**Tuesday, May 7**

**1 p.m. to 2 p.m. | Mills Library, Connection Centre, Room L113**

Join Dr. Allan Rosenfeld who brings his personal interest and years of experience in family practice medicine to this interactive session. He will review 13 factors that impact healthy living and the role they play in longevity. For the last 27 years has worked as an Occupational Consultant for a variety of employers in the GTA, including the City of Mississauga, Town of Oakville and McMaster University. Throughout this time Dr. Rosenfeld obtained his Diploma in Occupational Health and Safety in 1993, and his Canadian Fellowship in Occupational Medicine in 2007, while maintaining a thriving family practice. He has special interest in Preventative Medicine and Exercise Physiology and has participated in several courses pertaining to Preventative Health and nutrition at Harvard University. This combination of family practice and extensive experience in Occupational medicine in diverse working environments, including multi-union workplaces, makes his a unique voice in the field of disability management, accommodation, biosafety, medical surveillance and wellness education. [Click here](#) to register.

## Vendor Fair and Barbeque

Wednesday, May 8

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Burke Science Building lawn

- Vendor Fair
- Health and Safety Award of Excellence Presentation
- Video contest presentation



Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) members can enjoy a complimentary lunch as a thank you for contributions toward health and safety at the University. All others are welcome to attend the BBQ for a minimal cost of \$5.

## Hazardous Spill Clean-Up Demo

Thursday, May 9th

12 noon - 1 p.m.

ABB 122

Many of us work with hazardous materials but we may not put a lot of thought into what needs to be done if these materials are spilled. Some of us may not even think of the materials that we use as “hazardous materials” – but what if your container is knocked off the counter and breaks? Do you know where your spill kit is? Do you know how to use it?

If you come across a spill and don't know what it is, contact McMaster Security immediately. Security can summon assistance from EOHSS during both regular business hours and off-hours. If you're working in a lab and something spills, we expect you to know what you're working with and how to clean it up. EOHSS needs to be informed that a spill has occurred to ensure that people and the environment weren't affected. In cases where they are, there may be certain reporting obligations that must be conducted by EOHSS on behalf of the University. However, you are responsible for dealing with the spill if it is reasonable to do so. What spills shouldn't you clean up? A spill that will require more than one spill kit or is hazardous to your health to clean-up (generating toxic fumes for example).

This demonstration will walk you through the proper way to deal with a spill. We will start with assessing the spill – identifying what it is and if we have the means **to clean it up**. **Then we will don the proper PPE and go about cleaning the spill**. **Finally, we** will contain the waste and properly label it for disposal by the hazardous waste company. No registration required.

**All attendees will have the opportunity to enter draws for a variety of prizes which will be announced at the completion of the week.**



For the latest safety tools, resources and updates, follow us on Twitter and find us on Facebook @McMasterSafety.

# Instilling a Strong Safety Culture

A safety culture is the commitment to a set of beliefs, attitudes, and actions by all levels of employees towards improved health, well-being, and safety of every aspect of your workplace.

There are risks in many of the tasks we perform throughout the day. Recognizing, assessing and putting controls in place to reduce or eliminate these risks creates a safer working environment for everyone.



When safety is forefront in everyone's mind before assigning tasks, evaluating performance, and measuring productivity – we have a safety culture – we are putting our people first.

Everyone who supervises or oversees another's tasks has a legal obligation to “take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of that worker” (OH&S Act, Section 27(2)). With that in mind, supervisors should be the role models for putting safety first. When safety is discussed at all meetings, incidents are shared, and training is reviewed – this instills a strong safety culture and reminds everyone that safety is part of everyone's job and we have an obligation to ourselves and others to work safely.

## Supervisors/PIs

- Incorporate Health & Safety as a standing item on your meeting agendas
- Discuss relevant injuries/incidents from the Central JHSC minutes
- Review SOPs and practices routinely carried out with an eye on safety first
- Review training annually and when new students/workers arrive in your area

## Employees/Students

- Ask questions – know what you are working with and the hazards involved
- Review your training – has anything changed in your workplace? Have you been trained properly?
- Point out hazards to your supervisor and complete Injury/Incident Report form
- Take ownership of the areas you work in and help others to work safely

# Incorporating Safety into Team Meetings

A workplace with a strong safety culture where employees feel supported by senior management and where safety is incorporated into the daily routine is a safer workplace.

Some may think that safety is only important in high risk jobs, like on construction sites, working with dangerous equipment or working at heights. McMaster employees experience injuries and incidents across all departments. Some of our most serious injuries occur just walking from one building to another.



One way to be safer is to talk about it. Regular **safety talks** are very effective ways to get employees thinking about safety. A safety talk does not have to be elaborate or long or organized into a sleek presentation. In fact, it should be very brief; not more than 5 minutes long. It can be as simple as a reminder to hold handrails when using the stairs. This brief reminder could make a difference by preventing a potential injury.

At your next meeting add a **safety talk** to your agenda. Talking safety at every team meeting will show the team that safety is important and top of mind to management. **What is more important than all members of your team working safely and being healthy!**

Need some ideas for a safety talk?

- **Stop texting and walking**
- **Use designated sidewalks and paths**
- **Wear appropriate footwear**
- **Report hazards to your supervisor**
- **Do not use broken equipment**
- **Mental Health - [Employee and Family Assistance Plan \(EFAP\)](#)**
- **Always wear your personal protective equipment (PPE)**
- **Test your load before lifting**
- **Ensure your training is complete and up to date**
- **Document procedures (SOPs)**
- **Office ergonomics - check your workstation by using the [Ergonomics Self Assessment Checklist](#)**
- **Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls**

# Preventing Indoor Trips - Housekeeping can make a big difference!

McMaster University's leading cause of serious injuries are a result of slips, trips and falls. Ensuring that workspaces, hallways and stairwells are free and clear of trip and slip hazards can go a long way in preventing an injury.

First things first, educate yourself by completing mandatory [Slips, Trips and Falls training](#). Take a moment to inspect your own area. Does it require a cleanup?

If you have been storing items on the floor, pick them up and store on a shelf or on a counter. If they are no longer needed dispose of these items. Look under your desk to see if anything could possibly cause a trip. If wires or cords are hanging down, tie them up neatly using zip ties and secure to the desk so they are off the floor to prevent feet from catching.

Filing cabinets should be equipped with a safety feature to only allow one drawer to open at one time in order to prevent tipping. Taller cabinets need to be secured to the wall. Contact Facility Services Customer Service or complete an online work order for this work. Ensure that cabinet drawers are closed immediately after using. A drawer left open could surprise an unsuspecting colleague walking into the room resulting in a trip.

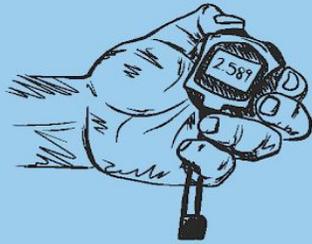
Mats and carpets need to be flat and secured to the floor. Wet mats and carpets should be equipped with a caution floor sign until dried. If possible avoid stepping on an extremely wet mat as this could cause footwear to become wet and potentially result in a slip as you transition from the mat to the floor.

Clean up water or spills of any kind immediately in your area. If you observe a large spill contact Facility Services Customer Service to have the spill attended to by a custodian. If the spill has occurred in a food services area, alert the staff of the spill so it can be addressed quickly. If a caution floor sign is available place the sign at the spill to alert others who may not notice.

Take a look at hallways and stairwells in your area, these areas are to remain free and clear. It may be tempting to take advantage of what looks like prime storage space but this is in violation of the fire code. We rely on our stairwells as a safe route of egress in the event of a fire and combustibles stored in these areas may put building occupants at risk and prevent them from a quick and safe exit.

It's worth it to set aside a few minutes to declutter and tidy up your workspace. Everyone feels better after a spring cleaning!

# Prevention of Slips, Trips and Falls



Over **42,000**

workers are injured annually due to fall accidents

That's more than one injury every 2.5 minutes!

This number accounts for **17%** of the "loss-time injuries" that were accepted by workers' compensation boards or commissions across Canada. (in 2011)

## HOW CAN YOU PREVENT FALLS DUE TO SLIPS AND TRIPS?

### 1 Housekeeping

Good housekeeping is the first and the most fundamental level of preventing falls due to slips and trips.

- ▲ cleaning all spills immediately
- ▲ marking spills and wet areas
- ▲ mopping or sweeping debris
- ▲ removing clutter
- ▲ securing mats, rugs and carpets
- ▲ closing file cabinet or storage drawers
- ▲ covering cables that cross walkways
- ▲ keeping walking areas and walkways well lit
- ▲ replacing used light bulbs and faulty switches

Without good housekeeping practices, any other preventive measures such as installation of sophisticated flooring, specialty footwear or training on techniques of walking and safe falling will never be fully effective.

### 2 Footwear

Since there is no footwear with **anti-slip** properties for every condition, consultation with manufacturers is highly recommended in selecting proper footwear.

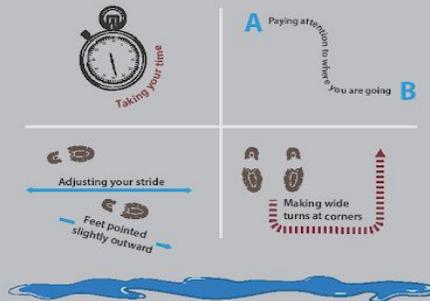
Properly fitting footwear increases comfort and prevents fatigue, which in turn improves safety for the employee.

### 3 Flooring

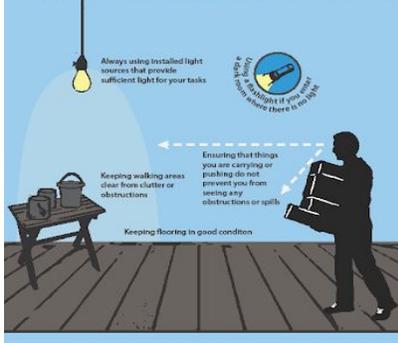
Installing or replacing **worn, non-slippery flooring** can further improve safety and reduce the risk of falling, as well as prevent or reduce foot fatigue. Recoating or replacing floors, installing mats, pressure-sensitive abrasive strips or abrasive-filled paint-on coating and metal or synthetic decking contributes to slip prevention measures.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO AVOID FALLING AT WORK?

YOU CAN REDUCE THE RISK OF SLIPPING ON WET FLOORING BY:

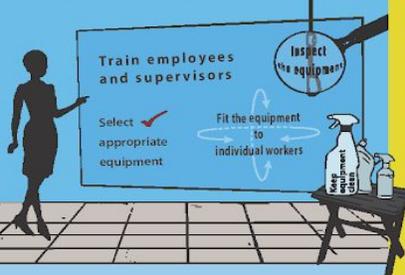


YOU CAN REDUCE THE RISK OF TRIPPING BY:



YOU CAN REDUCE THE RISK OF FALLING FROM A HEIGHT BY:

Establishing a complete fall protection program (if one is not in place), including:



**66%** of falls happen on the same level resulting from slips and trips

**34%** are falls from a height

## SLIPS

SLIPS HAPPEN WHERE THERE IS TOO LITTLE FRICTION OR TRACTION BETWEEN YOUR FOOTWEAR AND THE WALKING SURFACE.

## TRIPS

TRIPS HAPPEN WHEN YOUR FOOT COLLIDES WITH AN OBJECT CAUSING YOU TO LOSE BALANCE AND EVENTUALLY FALL.

## FALLS

Each type of fall requires different features in a fall prevention program.

- COMMON CAUSES OF SLIPS ARE:
- ▲ wet or oily surfaces
  - ▲ weather hazards
  - ▲ loose rugs or mats
  - ▲ walking surfaces with unequal traction

- COMMON CAUSES OF TRIPS ARE:
- ▲ obstructed view
  - ▲ poor lighting
  - ▲ clutter
  - ▲ wrinkled carpeting
  - ▲ unsecured cables
  - ▲ open drawers not being closed
  - ▲ uneven walking surfaces

- FALLS FROM AN ELEVATION COMMONLY OCCUR FROM HEIGHTS DUE TO:
- ▲ ladders
  - ▲ roofs
  - ▲ floor stairs
  - ▲ jumping to a lower level

FALLS FROM AN ELEVATION HAPPEN WHEN WORKERS ARE AT RISK OF FALLING THREE METERS OR MORE.

Sources:  
[http://www.wsib.on.ca/files/Content/Downloadable%20File/SlipsBrochure\\_2130A/Slips2130A.pdf](http://www.wsib.on.ca/files/Content/Downloadable%20File/SlipsBrochure_2130A/Slips2130A.pdf)  
[http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pdf/fs\\_falls.pdf](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pdf/fs_falls.pdf)

## We are all Leaders in Safety

It doesn't require a job title for someone to be a leader. We can all be leaders in the way that we conduct ourselves on a daily basis. From the beginning of our day we are managing risk.

If you drive to work, you wear your seatbelt and follow the rules of the road. If you walk or bike to work, you are most likely adhering to pedestrian or cycle safety practices. When you arrive at work, these practices should be continued throughout your day.

How can you be a leader in safety? Simple practices such as wearing the appropriate protective equipment for your work, cleaning up a spill or advising a colleague of the proper and safe way to perform a task can go a long way in demonstrating your leadership in safety.

Ask your manager or supervisor to add safety as an agenda item at your team meetings. If you are a manager or supervisor, add safety as an agenda item at your team meetings. Encourage your colleagues to speak up about safety. Make it a part of your every day.

A healthy and functioning internal responsibility system requires us all to be leaders in safety so that we finish our day just the way we started it.



# Materials Handling - The Most Common Cause of Occupational Fatigue and Lower Back Pain

**Manual material handling (MMH)** is the process of moving or supporting an object by physical force. Almost one in four workers will experience some form of injury as a result of lifting and lowering, pushing and pulling, carrying and holding, or resisting loads (Canadian Safety Council).

Reduce your likelihood of a sprain/strain injury to the lower back, shoulders, and upper limbs by following these safe lifting tips (**Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety**):

- Prepare for the lift by warming up your muscles.
- Use handles or lift aids where appropriate.
- Keep your back straight and backside out.
- Stand close to the load and face the direction you intend to move.
- Be sure you have a good grip on the load.
- Tuck chin into your chest.
- Lift load as close to and as centered to body as possible.
- Keep arms straight and abdominal muscles tight.
- Lift smoothly without jerking.
- Avoid twisting, side bending, and carrying loads with only one hand.
- Lift with your legs and body weight, not with your back.



## McMaster is a tobacco and smoke free campus

The warmer weather invites all who spend time at McMaster to enjoy various outdoor spaces and nature trails. McMaster's goal is to maintain a healthy environment for all.

A reminder to staff, faculty, students and community members that McMaster is a tobacco and smoke free campus. The designation includes the Hamilton campus, inside and on the grounds of the Ron Joyce Centre in Burlington, and at all McMaster-owned properties. The lands owned by Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) are 100% smoke-free as well.

If you are interested in smoking cessation, there are many resources available to support those who want to manage their tobacco use and those who choose to quit using tobacco products. These resources for students, staff, faculty and the public are available on the [Tobacco and Smoke-Free Campus website](#).

## What do I do if I see someone smoking on campus?

Hopefully everyone will recognize and respect the goals of this initiative but should you see someone smoking on campus, the best initial approach is a direct, courteous reminder to the person and a request to refrain from smoking on campus. If there is a persistent problem, or you are uncomfortable approaching the situation, contact Security Services at ext. 24281.

## COMING SOON: ParticipACTION is Back, and We're Taking the Challenge at MAC!

You may have grown up with **ParticipACTION** or only have heard of it as a delightful rumour. The latest rumour is true, though – **ParticipACTION** is back, and the McMaster community is up to the challenge! McMaster will compete in the **ParticipACTION Community Better Challenge**, from May 31 – June 16. We will be hosting events over these two weeks that will promote McMaster employees to get up and be active. Events include Lacrosse Lessons, Salsa Dancing, and even a Soccer Lesson led by Forge FC. [Find out more now on the Community Better Challenge website](#), and keep checking [our website](#) on how we, at McMaster, can compete as part of the Hamilton community for \$150 000 in funding for local physical activity initiatives.

The Healthy Workplace Committee will be sending more information in May with instructions on how to register.