

The Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Board continue to report the need for slip, trip and fall controls in the workplace. Approximately 20 people die as a result of workplace falls every year. Every day, 80 Ontario workers are injured because of a fall; that's one every 20 minutes! Slips, trips and falls are one of the leading causes of injury in the workplace today. The reoccurrence of accidents can be avoided through proper safety knowledge and a good attitude!

People slip on all kinds of things such as water or oil spills; small objects like electrical cords; and they fall off ladders or down stairways. That good news is that slips, trips and falls can be prevented, but only if everyone does their part.

You can reduce the risk of slipping on wet floors by:

- taking your time and being aware of where you are going
- changing your walk to a pace that is suitable for the surface you are walking on and the tasks you are doing
- cleaning up spills immediately
- Wearing appropriate slip-resistant footwear

You can reduce the risk of tripping by:

- keeping walking areas clear from clutter
- closing drawers and cabinets
- using a flashlight where there is no light
- ensuring that objects you are carrying or pushing do not block you from seeing any hazardous situations such as spills
- Take micro-breaks to stand up and stretch to avoid trips that are a result of brief moments of daydreaming or inattention

A great tool to use when assessing a potential situation that could result in a slip, trip, or fall is the 5x5 rule. Take 5 steps back and ask yourself 5 important questions: What will I be doing? What are the hazards? What equipment do I need? How can I get hurt? What if something unexpected happens? This simple work safety tool helps you evaluate all of the potential hazards associated with ALL tasks before starting a job!

If you spot a hazardous situation that could result in a slip, trip, or fall, take action to eliminate the hazard. Barricade large spills and trip hazards that can't be quickly repaired, like uneven floors or loose carpet.

The safety rules for preventing slips, trips and falls really are just 'common sense' rules, which you probably have heard many times before. However, a look at the statistics tells us that they need to be repeated until we do our part to prevent those disastrous slips, trips and falls. Always practice safety and don't learn it through experience!

Remember: Being in control of your movement is the best protection against slips, trips and falls.