

County of Knox

Slips, Trips & Falls Program



County Administrative Offices
62 Union Street
Rockland, Maine 04841

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SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS WRITTEN SAFETY PROGRAM

Introduction

Slips, trips, and falls exact a substantial toll in terms of death, personal injury and suffering, workers' compensation, loss in productivity, and liability. Loss of productivity is often an unfortunate side effect. On average, workers who are injured as a result of a slip and fall accident spend more days away from work than those who are injured as a result of other causes.

Slips can occur when floors or other working surfaces become slippery due to wet or oily processes, floor cleaning, leaks, or from materials and debris left in walkways. Trips can occur due to uneven floor or working surfaces, protruding nails and boards, from stretched carpet or bunched floor mats intended to prevent slipping, from holes or depressions in working surfaces, and from step-risers on stairs that are not uniform in height. Both slips and trips can result in falls. In addition, falls can occur when ladders are not maintained properly, and when stairways and elevated working surfaces are not designed properly.

According to OSHA, slips, trips and falls constitute the majority of general industry accidents and result in back injuries, strains and sprains, contusions, and fractures. Additionally, they cause 15 percent of all accidental deaths and are second only to motor vehicles as a cause of fatalities.

Hazard Control

Engineering Controls

Controls that are engineered into the job are the most effective type of control. Examples of engineering controls include:

- Redesign of equipment
- Substitution of a material, equipment, or process
- Change of process to minimize slips, trips, and falls
- Use of barriers to isolate a hazard
- Use of barriers to isolate a person

Administrative Controls

Change the way people do their jobs. They are only effective when people do what they are supposed to do. Administrative controls include:

- Education and training
- Signage
- Routine inspections of ladders, stairs, walking and working surfaces
- Maintenance
- Good housekeeping

Walking-Working Surface Inspection and Maintenance

Department Managers, Supervisors and employees share the responsibility to prevent accidental slips, trips and falls. Please refer to the attached Safety Short for hazard identification and prevention tips.

Action Required: Department Managers shall insure a monthly Health and Safety Inspection is conducted using the attached form. It features items intended to help the inspector identify and eliminate general safety hazards including common hazards which could cause slips, trips and falls. Special attention should be given to walking-working surfaces, housekeeping, lighting, vision, stairways and ladders. Immediate corrective action should be taken.



SAFETY SHORTS

PREVENTING SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS



Almost one in every five work-related injuries results from a slip, trip or fall. Falls kill more than 12,000 people a year, about 1,200 of them at work. That makes them the biggest cause of workplace fatalities after motor vehicle accidents. In Maine, nearly 3,000 employees lose time from work each year from slip/trip/fall type injuries. Slips, trips and falls whether on or off the job are expensive, disruptive, painful and may be tragic.

There are many situations that can cause slips, trips and falls. Most slip, trip and fall injuries can be prevented by eliminating workplace hazards and by behavior modification: people taking the proper action to work safely.

What You Can Do To Prevent Slips, Trips and Falls

- Wear footwear that is appropriate for the conditions inside and outside. On smooth or wet surfaces wear slip resistant soles. Avoid wearing high heels. On snowy, icy and rainy days wear boots to work and change after arriving.
- Clean footwear of mud, snow, etc. when entering a building.
- Be aware of changes in elevation and changes in walking surfaces. When moving from carpet to tile or dry tile to wet tile, etc. the friction (grip) between the sole of the shoe and the floor surface lessens. Alter your stride to take shorter, slower steps.
- Walk, don't run through work areas. When possible, stay on marked travel aisles and paths. Don't take "shortcuts" around machinery and equipment. Avoid areas that are cluttered or dimly lit.
- When carrying a load make sure you can see over and around it. Scan the area ahead and plan your travel path. Get help to carry heavy or awkward objects. Use carts or other mechanical aids.



- Clean up, correct, remove or report unsafe conditions such as spills, electric cords, frayed carpets, worn stairs and other hazards that could result in a slip/trip/fall injury. Warn others that a hazard exists by placing signs or cones or by isolation with caution tape or barricades.
- Do not allow equipment, tools, materials or other obstacles to accumulate in aisles or walkways. Never store or place items on stairs.
- Keep desk and file cabinet drawers closed when not being used or when unattended.
- Always use a ladder or step stool. Never stand on a chair, desk, shelf, crate or box or any other unstable items to reach something. If you must routinely reach items in high locations, purchase a ladder or steps to allow it to be safely done.
- Walk erect using even strides and good balance. Always use handrails when available.
- Use “three point positioning” when entering or exiting trucks, equipment or construction vehicles. Maintain three points of attachment at all times; both hands and one foot or both feet and one hand. Enter and exit equipment facing it. Use all of the steps, never jump.
- Maintain floors clean, free of water, oil or grease. Areas such as mechanics bays may be periodically steam cleaned. Tiled floors such as in kitchens or school cafeterias that have been worn or filled smooth can be etched to restore a rougher surface.
- Apply non-slip surfacing such as adhesive backed sheets, anti-slip paint, open-spaced grates or mats to ramps, docks, platforms or stairways recognized as hazardous.
- Paint edges where elevation changes occur with “caution yellow” paint. Post signs to warn of dangerous areas.
- During winter months remove snow and ice and apply sand and salt before employees come to work and frequently thereafter. Note areas that drain poorly, retain snow, or are habitually slippery, and initiate permanent changes (engineer out) to eliminate the hazard.
- Conduct periodic inspections of the property and grounds to identify and correct slip, trip and fall hazards. Consider hazards to employees and possible liability exposures for the public. Review interior and exterior walkways, stairs, handrails, pavement conditions, parking areas, lighting and all other hazards mentioned in this Safety Short.

Be Pro-active! Get Involved!
Eliminate Slip, Trip and Fall Injuries!

Knox County Dept: _____
Monthly Health and Safety Inspection

Area _____ Date conducted: _____

Person conducting inspection: _____

Department Managers are responsible to insure monthly completion of this safety check for areas under their control. Note the location of any deficiency, brief department staff and notify Building Maintenance (Jim Hagan) to arrange for repair.

Exterior	YES	Requires Action	N/A
Are walkways and parking lots clear of obstacles or physical conditions (cracks, holes or uneven surfaces, etc) that could cause slip/tripping hazard?			
Are walkways, parking lots, and stairs kept clear of snow and ice and all other slip and trip hazards?			
Are ice control products such as salt and sand used effectively?			
Is parking lot, sidewalk and building entrance lighting adequate?			
Housekeeping			
Are non-slip entry mats in place, flat (without humps, ripples or tears) and adequate to capture water and soil?			
Are floors kept clean?			
Are all floor and ceiling tiles in place and in good condition?			
Are ceiling tiles and air registers clean and free of stains?			
Are carpets kept clean and free of any visible mold or musty smell?			
Are carpets free of holes, tears, ripples, humps and worn spots?			
Are all walkways maintained in free and clear condition?			
Are partitions walls and other fabric surfaces maintained and cleaned regularly?			
Fire Safety			
Are Exits and EXIT ways clear and unobstructed?			
Are all EXIT signs lighted and operating properly?			
Does the emergency lighting operate properly?			
Are fire extinguishers inspected monthly?			
Are all Fire Doors (IE: stairway doors) kept closed?			
Are evacuation route signs and emergency numbers posted?			
Have the Evacuation Wardens been properly trained?			
Is the Emergency Action Plan up to date and is all staff trained to use it?			
Has there been an evacuation drill in the past 6 months? Date: _____			
Electrical Safety			
Are all electrical outlet covers in place?			
Are all cords out of the way of walking surfaces?			
Are all cords and plugs in good condition?			
Is the use of extension cords prohibited?			
Are portable heaters prohibited?			
Are all "breaker panels" marked?			
Are "power taps" used properly?			

Knox County Dept: _____
Monthly Health and Safety Inspection

Electrical Safety Cont...	YES	Requires Action	N/A
Is all equipment properly grounded?			
Ground Fault Circuit interrupter (GFCI) within 6 feet of water source?			
Breaker panels clear for at least 3 feet?			
Chemical Hazards			
Is the departmental chemical Inventory up to date and are Safety Data Sheets available and current?			
Have all staff received Hazard Communication training?			
Do outside contractors supply SDS's when working in or around the building with chemicals?			
Are all product containers or refillable spray bottles labeled with contents and basic safety information?			
General Office Conditions			
Are first aid kits properly stocked with unexpired supplies?			
Is lighting adequate in all areas including adjacent halls and stairways?			
Does the elevator have a current inspection date?			
Is ventilation adequate?			
Are food vending, Kitchen/snack or break areas clean?			
Are utility and drain covers in place and level with surrounding floor?			
Are stair nosing/edges, or other changes in floor surface height or pitch obvious or marked?			
Are required State and Federal labor posters in place?			
Is County Written Safety Programs binder up to date and available to employees?			
Ergonomics			
Have all employee work stations been ergonomically evaluated?			
Are desk and chairs in good condition and adjusted properly for the employee?			
Do employees display knowledge of Office Ergonomics and safe lifting best practices?			
Department Specific Items			
Are printed copies of Department-specific safety policies available to employees?			
Check AED- (Green light, pad & battery exp dates ok)			

NOTES and Actions Taken: