



Slips, Trips and Falls

Falls are one of the leading causes of unintentional injuries in the United States, accounting for nearly 8.6 million* visits to the emergency room.

Adults 55 and older are more prone to being victims of falls, and the resulting injuries can diminish the ability to lead active, independent lives. The number of fall deaths among adults 65 or older is 4 times the number of fall deaths among all other age groups.

Most common locations for falls:

- Doorways
- Ramps
- Cluttered hallways
- Areas with heavy traffic
- Uneven surfaces
- Areas prone to wetness or spills

Most common locations for falls to another level:

- Unguarded heights
- Unstable work surfaces
- Ladders
- Stairs



DID YOU KNOW?

Here are some fall-proofing tips for work and home:

- Clean up all spills immediately
- Stay off freshly mopped floors
- Secure electrical and phone cords out of traffic areas
- Remove small throw rugs or use non-skid mats
- Keep frequently used items in easily reachable areas
- Wear shoes with good support and slip-resistant soles
- Arrange furniture to provide open walking pathways
- Keep drawers and cabinet doors closed at all times
- Remove tripping hazards (paper, boxes, books, clothes, toys, shoes) from stairs and walkways
- Install handrails on all staircases on both sides
- If you have young children, install gates at the top and bottom of stairs (unlatch the gate to pass – don't climb over them)
- Ensure adequate lighting both indoors and outdoors
- Remove debris from exterior walkways
- Adjust gutter downspouts to drive water away from pathways
- Periodically check the condition of walkways and steps, and repair damages immediately
- Never stand on a chair, table or other surface on wheels

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Whether at work or at home, you can take steps to prevent slips, trip and falls.

Falls can be prevented

Ladder Safety

- Always keep at least three points of contact with the ladder (i.e., two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand)
- Place the base on a firm, solid surface
- A straight or extension ladder should be placed 1 foot away from the surface it rests against for every 4 feet of ladder height
- When you climb, always face the ladder and grip the rungs, not the siderails
- Climb down a ladder one rung at a time
- Do not climb with tools in hand – use a tool belt
- Keep your body between the ladder siderails when climbing
- Do not lean or overreach – reposition the ladder closer to the work instead
- Do not use ladders outdoors in windy or inclement weather



Additional Suggestions

Exercise, such as brisk walking, tai chi and yoga, helps reduce falls by improving strength and balance. Stay hydrated while exercising and consult with your physician before starting an exercise program.

Some medicines, combination of medicines or other combinations (sun, alcohol, etc.) can **make you drowsy or light-headed**, which can lead to a fall. Have a doctor or pharmacist review all of your medications.

Have your vision checked regularly by an eye doctor. Poor vision can greatly increase your chance of falling.

Regularly take measures to **identify and eliminate fall hazards** at work and home.

Pay attention to where you are going. Distractions can lead to a slip, trip or fall due to a step, crack or hole in the ground.

Be aware of your surroundings at all times. Falls can happen in any location, even in familiar areas.

Report all workplace slips, trips and falls, even if minor, and all potential hazards.

*According to Injury Facts 2011 edition, based on 2008 data

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