

THE SAFETY OBSERVER

Safety Information for Employees

SLIPS AND FALLS

A smooth surface does not have to be wet to pose a slipping threat. Many types of flooring and conditions, such as tile or recently waxed surfaces, can catch an unsuspecting person off guard. If these types of surfaces do become wet or damp, the potential hazard is multiplied.

- Very smooth surfaces should have a mat or rug at the entrance of the area. Sometimes a long mat or runner should be used to expedite the flow of traffic from one point to another to avoid a slip. Do not use mats with curled-up corners.
- On days that are rainy when water or moisture is tracked into an already slippery area, a sign posting the slip hazard will be necessary in addition to a mat.
- Proper shoes can play a major role in preventing a slip. Shoes with slip and oil resistant soles are highly recommended. Also, shoes that do not fit properly and shoes with worn out soles could cause you to lose your balance.
- If your property uses an automatic sprinkler system, avoid watering areas adjacent to sidewalks and walkways during the high traffic time of the day.
- During cold weather, pay close attention to icy conditions. Do not pile snow along walkways. Document all snow/ice removal efforts on the appropriate log.
- Clearly mark any uneven surface.
- Walk; never run. There's shouldn't be any reason to run while working, except in an emergency. Don't take shortcuts.

Uneven floors, trash or debris left in walkways, extension cords across paths of travel, holes in the ground hidden by grass, and tools not put away are just some tripping hazards that are all too common. Just because you are aware of a potential tripping hazard, don't assume others will be. Keep work areas tidy at all times. Be on the lookout and take immediate corrective action whenever we notice that a tripping hazard is present.

Stairs must be inspected regularly. Fix any worn or broken spots immediately. Look for any protruding nails, screws, or defects in the material used to make up the stairs. Make sure there is no mildew or mold accumulating on stairs. Railings should be in place and firmly anchored. Make sure there are no pinch hazards along the railing, damaged portions that could cause splinters, or sharp edges. *(If any of these discrepancies are noticed, an inspection of all property stairs must be conducted.)*

- Material or equipment must never be stored or placed on stairways or walkways.
- Stairs should have non-slip or slip-resistant surfaces, with an abrasive covering on the front edge.
- Use the handrail.
- Lighting must be adequate for people to see where they're going. All lighting repairs and bulb replacements must be made a priority.
- When using the stairs, never carry objects that block the view of your path.