

safety matters

From your safety partners at Lloyd Sadd Insurance

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Toolbox Talks for

Avoiding Slips and Falls

A janitorial employee was scrubbing the steps and floors with water and a cleaning agent. An observant worker realized that soon, dozens of employees would be going down these steps for their lunch break. The worker took the proper action to avert this potentially dangerous situation and set up a wet floor sign.

Do Your Safety Part

Slips and falls account for many work-related injuries, and an unguarded wet floor is just one of the many possible causes. It is important that employees are able to spot unsafe conditions that could lead to slips and falls, and do what they can to prevent them.

There are various ways to suffer slips and falls while working. Employees can slip and lose their balance, trip over objects left in the walkway or simply fall from an elevated position to the ground. To avoid slips and falls, have employees be on the lookout for foreign substances on the floor, such as:

- Deposits of water
- Food or beverages
- Grease or oil
- Sawdust
- Soap
- Other manufacturing debris

Even small quantities are enough to make employees fall.

Good Housekeeping Counts

When employees are entering a building from outside or from debris areas, they

should clean their footwear thoroughly. Snowy and rainy weather requires a doormat at each entrance to allow for wiping of shoes. Employee should avoid running, walk safely and avoid changing directions too sharply.

Employees need to beware of tripping hazards. Trash, unused materials or any object left in aisles designed for pedestrian traffic invites falls. Extension cords, tools, carts and other items should be removed or properly barricaded off. If equipment or supplies are left in walkways, employees should report it so the proper personnel can remove it. Have employees keep passageways clean of debris by using trash barrels and recycling bins.

Practise Prevention

Make sure employees are walking in designated walking areas. Short cuts through machine or other manufacturing areas can cause accidents. Employees should concentrate on where they are going – horseplay and inattention leaves them vulnerable to unsafe conditions. Have employees hold on to handrails when using stairs or ramps. They are there to help them if they fall. If they are carrying a heavy load that hampers their ability to properly ascend or descend stairs, they should use the elevator or find help.

The worst falls are from elevated positions such as ladders, and can result in serious injury or death. Employees need to learn and practise ladder safety and the proper use of scaffolding. For example, when climbing,

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they should use a ladder of proper length that is in good condition, keep it placed on a firm surface, and not climb a ladder placed on machinery, crates, stock or boxes.

Employees should keep the ladder's base one-fourth metre away from the wall for every one metre of height and not over-reach. They need to always have control of their balance when working from a ladder.

Employee should never climb a ladder with their hands full, and always transport tools in their proper carrying devices.

Slips and falls occur every day. The extent of injuries and their recurrence can be minimized through proper safety knowledge, good housekeeping and practising prevention.