

Trip and Fall Hazards

You don't have to fall from a great height to get injured.

Many workplace fall injuries occur on level ground when employees trip over unexpected objects in their path. A little trip can lead to injuries like muscle strains or sprains, torn ligaments, broken bones, back or spine damage, and even head injuries.

AVOID common trip hazards by:

- Keeping work areas neat and tidy and putting tools and materials away after use
- Picking up items from the floor even if you didn't put them there
- Stepping around obstructions, not on or over them
- Walking slowly, making sure you can see where you're going, especially when carrying a load
- Watching for changes in floor level--such as a few steps or a ramp up or down
- Watching your step before entering and leaving elevators
- Immediately reporting lighting problems to maintenance
- Using a flashlight in dark areas, such as outside the facility at night
- Not leaving boxes, bags, tools, or other materials on the floor
- Not laying cords or power cables across walkways
- Not leaving any items on stairs
- Not leaving drawers open for somebody to trip over

How to fall "safely"

If you can't possibly eliminate every single trip and fall hazard, you can still help employees reduce the chance of injury by teaching them the "safe" way to fall if they do trip. The trick is to minimize the impact of falling by:

- Bending elbows and knees so legs and arms absorb the fall
- Rolling with the fall
- Protecting vital areas (e.g., tucking head into collarbone)
- Using the inside of the forearms and palms of hands to break the fall rather than wrists

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