

Slips, Trips, and Falls

Slips, trips, and falls are second only to automobile accidents in causing personal injury. On stairways alone, falls result in almost two million disabling injuries yearly. There are thousands more minor injuries caused by slips, trips, and falls each year. Most alarming of all is the fact that industrial falls cause over 1000 deaths each year. At CMU we have had a number of serious injuries, and falls are the leading cause of injury here on campus.



Slips

Slips occur when there is too little friction between a person's feet and the walking surface. Many factors can cause a slip. Ice, oil, water, cleaning fluids, and other slippery substances are the most obvious causes. However, the flooring may be inappropriate-perhaps it is a slick material-or the person who slips may not be wearing proper shoes.

Trips

Trips occur when a person's foot contacts an object and they are thrown off balance. The main cause of tripping is obvious--anytime something is in a walkway it could cause someone to trip. Another culprit is an object which projects into the walkway, such as material stored low on a shelf. Poor lighting and uneven walking surfaces also contribute to tripping.

Falls

Falls can be caused by a number of things. Slips and trips frequently result in a fall, but falls also occur for other reasons. Improper use of ladders and scaffolding is one of the most common sources of falls here at CMU. These can result in a fall, and it is usually a very serious one. Falls also happen when people climb objects without using fall protection equipment. Don't risk serious injury by taking shortcuts

Prevention

To prevent slips, avoid walking in areas which pose slipping hazards if at all possible. Always promptly clean up spills of slippery substances. Better yet, prevent the spills in the first place.

Prevention of trips is simple but does require diligence. Keep objects that could cause someone to trip out of the way. Repair uneven flooring and install proper lighting if necessary.

If you are working on a ladder, scaffold, or other elevated platform, make sure you know the requirements for using them safely. Always use fall protection equipment when it is required. If you aren't sure if you need it, contact EH&S.

Questions?

If you have any questions regarding slips, trips, or falls, please call the Department of Environmental Health and Safety at 8-8182.