

HEALTH & SAFETY OPERATIONAL GUIDELINE			
Title:	SLIPS TRIPS AND FALLS		
Section:	SAFE WORK	Number:	05-010
Subsection:	General Health and Safety	Effective Date:	January 17, 2008

Definitions

“Elevated Level Fall” means falling from an upper level to a lower level. Not as frequent as same-level fall, but usually more severe. Examples include stairways, ladders, lifts and vehicles/equipment.

“Same Level Fall” means falling onto the surface upon which you are standing or walking. Same level falls happen with high frequency, but are usually not as severe as elevated level falls.

“Slip” occurs when there is too little friction or traction between the foot and the surface underfoot. A high coefficient of friction (COF) reduces the risk of a slip.

“Step Fall” occurs when the front foot lands on a surface lower or higher than expected, causing a loss of balance

“Trip” occurs when the foot strikes an object and is suddenly stopped, causing a loss of balance

Purpose and Scope

- Define “slips” and “falls”
- Describe how to prevent slips and falls
- Describe roles and responsibilities

General

About 20% of lost-time injuries are caused by falls. Slips happen when there is too little traction between the footwear and the walking surface or the walking surfaces are irregular. Any fall has the potential of causing serious injury.

Problems that can lead to falls:

- Inappropriate footwear
- Walking too fast or running
- Distractions
- Carrying materials which obstruct view
- Wearing sunglasses in low-light areas
- Failure to use handrails

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Procedures

- Use the “three-point system”; ensure that three of your four limbs are in contact with the ladder, vehicle or handrail at all times
- Keep walkways clean and clear of clutter, such as cords, boxes or file drawers left open. Identified hazards should be signed and corrected immediately.
- Salt should be applied to all icy surfaces as soon as necessary
- Wet surfaces should be signed as a hazard immediately and cleaned up as soon as possible.
- Work areas where walking on a surface likely to be slippery, non-skid strips, floor coatings or coverings should be used.
- Adequate lighting levels to ensure proper vision are also important in the prevention of falls, particularly in stairwells. Moving from light to dark areas, or vice versa, can cause temporary vision problems that might be just enough to cause a person to slip on a slippery surface or trip over a misplaced object.
- Carrying an oversized object can also obstruct one’s vision and result in a fall.
- The use of non-skid throw rugs on tile and other slippery floors will increase the COF.
- Handrails should be provided on both sides of stairways.
- All stairs should have the same rise and depth, with visible, non-skid edges.
- Guardrails shall be installed and maintained to prevent a fall from an elevated platform.

Learn How to Fall

Naturally, the goal is not to slip, trip and fall; however, the possibility of a fall still exists. There are correct ways to fall, the recommended procedures are:

- Tuck your chin in, turn your head, and throw an arm up. It is better to land on your arm than on your head.
- While falling, twist or roll your body to the side. It is better to land on your buttocks and side than on your back.
- Keep your wrists, elbows and knees bent. Do not try to break the fall with your hands or elbows. When falling, the objective is to have as many square inches of your body contact the surface as possible, thus, spreading out the impact of the fall.

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Personal Protective Equipment

Footwear

- Footwear should be low heel, rubber sole shoes that also provide support to the ankle.
- Shoes with soft rubber soles and heels with rubber cleats provide a high COF.
- Shoes should also support the ankle.
- Low heel shoes provide a greater COF than high heels.

Emergency Procedures

Maintenance/Testing/Inspection

- Ensure railings in and around all buildings are available as required by the Ontario Building Code. Railings should be constructed and maintained to comply with the Ontario Building Code. Regularly inspect ladders and handrails
- All building entrances and exits shall be maintained to ensure the safety of all occupants. Snow and ice will be removed from all fire exits and escape routes regularly
- Regular housekeeping inspections
- Inspect lighting
- Keep walking surfaces dry and slip resistant
- Pedestrian routes should be regularly monitored for changes to the surface. Uneven surfaces should be ground smooth and potholes or other trip hazards repaired quickly.
- All stairs should have the same rise and depth, with visible, non-skid edges.

THIS GUIDELINE TAKES EFFECT IMMEDIATELY AND REMAINS IN EFFECT UNTIL REPLACED BY A NEW GUIDELINE OR SUPERSEDED BY LEGISLATION/REGULATION

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Employer Co-Chair, JHSC

Worker Co-Chair, JHSC