



About the National Safety Council:



The National Safety Council saves lives by preventing injuries and deaths at work, in homes and communities, and on the roads through leadership, research, education and advocacy. Visit us at nsc.org for up-to-date industry news, information and tools to take your safety program to the next level.

Welcome to *Spotlight on Safety*, an e-newsletter brought to you by the Department of the Interior Office of Occupational Safety and Health in partnership with the National Safety Council. We hope you will find this service of value. Send feedback or ideas on topics you would like to see to membershipinfo@nsc.org. Please put "Department of the Interior feedback" in the subject line.

5-Minute Safety Talk: Slips, Trips and Falls

Everyone is responsible for creating a safe work environment. There are steps you can take to be successful in eliminating workplace injuries. Use this [5-minute Safety Talk](#) to help your employees reduce slips, trips and falls.



Keep Your Workplace Safe From Slip, Trip and Fall Hazards

Have you ever been injured in a fall at work? It happens far too often - and it is preventable.

Slips, trips and falls are the No. 2 cause of nonfatal injury in the workplace, outranked only by overexertion. While these injuries often are associated with high-risk jobs, like roofing or utilities work, risk factors can be found across all industries and occupations.

By the Numbers

According to Injury Facts®, in 2012 slips, trips and falls were responsible for 704 deaths and 219,630 injuries - that's 24% of all occupational injuries resulting in days off work.

- 46,160 injuries and 570 deaths resulted from a fall to a lower level
- 131,280 injuries and 120 deaths resulted from falls on the same level

These incidents included people in such occupations as sales (11,840 injuries); management, business and financial (7,630); and office and administrative support (12,300).

A four-pronged approach can go a long way toward eliminating this problem in the workplace:

- Learn to identify hazards before they cause a problem
- Investigate incidents and near misses
- Follow up with controls that will prevent another incident
- Make safety, [safety training](#) and hazard reporting an integral part of the organization's culture

Identifying Hazards

Be proactive in preventing slips, trips and falls by identifying hazards before someone gets hurt. Provide a 90-second inspection of your work environment. Areas to focus on include doorways, ramps, cluttered hallways, heavy traffic areas, uneven surfaces, open drawers, cords, stairways, etc. You might be surprised at what you find.

A safety audit examines processes and procedures:

- Is equipment positioned and engineered properly?
- Do production demands cause carelessness or clutter?
- Is new personal protective equipment needed?
- Have laws changed to require more controls?

No discussion about slips, trips and falls would be complete without information on ladder safety. Deaths due to falls from a ladder or scaffolding at work have increased over the past several years. [Learn more about ladder safety at home and at work.](#)

Respond to Incidents and Near Misses

Find out how an employee was injured by [conducting a thorough investigation](#). Has it happened before and the hazard was never addressed? Does everyone know about the hazard and usually just try to avoid it? An incident is an opportunity to review and improve procedures and take corrective action.

But a near miss is really an opportunity to look into the future. Once the hazard is identified, an incident can be averted with the proper controls, maybe even resulting in a life saved.

Follow Up

Follow up is critical and can include the following actions:

- New processes
- Barriers around a hazard
- Repair of loose carpeting or cords
- Snow and ice removal
- Reduction of clutter
- Signage
- Improved maintenance or housekeeping procedures
- Slip-resistant floor treatments
- Skid strips on stairs
- New requirements for PPE (slip-resistant shoes, fall protection, hard hats)

Create a Safety Culture

Nothing has more impact on safety in the workplace than individual behavior. Employees need to know that they can report an incident or hazard without fear of retribution. Blame or punishment should never be part of the reporting process. [Employees have a right to work in a safe environment.](#)

They also need to become more aware of their own surroundings and behavior. Employees should be encouraged to avoid [distracted walking](#), make sure aisles are clear, floors are dry, and cords and carpets are taped down.

If employees re-awaken their thinking and adjust their behavior, hopefully even bring the safety message home to their families, incident rates will decline. This starts with education, not only for new hires, but also for the 30-year veteran employee who might be a little more set in his ways.

Featured Safety Poster:



Share this poster with your employees to educate them about slips, trips and falls.

[Get the poster.](#)

Featured Webinar



Visit our [Online Learning Library](#) to view our extensive webinar selection.

This month's suggested topic: "Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls - No Laughing Matter". Find the webinar under the "Workplace Safety" tab.

NSC Safety Awards



Employee engagement is key to a successful safety program! An award from the National Safety Council shows them you appreciate their efforts.

Safety awards from NSC instill employee pride; earn respect from your customers, community and peers; and place you one step ahead of your competition. [Learn more.](#)

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National Safety Council | 1121 Spring Lake Drive | Itasca | IL | 60143-3201