

SAFETY TALK

— Fall Prevention

Getting Ahead by Failing to Fall



Most people think slip, trip, and fall injuries happen more in the winter. But studies suggest that's not necessarily the case. It seems human behavior is the leading cause of these types of incidents.

Here are some unsafe behaviors that can cause an injury.

Loads that obstruct your field of vision increase your risk of falling down steps, tripping over curbs, or falling over obstacles in your pathway.

- ✓ Take smaller loads and make more frequent trips. Use a cart or get someone to help. Only carry loads you can see over.

Talking, texting, or reading while walking takes your mind and eyes off your surroundings and increases your risk of running into people, stepping in front of moving vehicles, falling off a curb, or tripping over objects in your pathway.

- ✓ Put your phone away. Don't text while walking. If it's urgent, stop, read, and then walk.

Taking short cuts increases the risk of stepping into holes, tripping over sprinkler heads, or slipping on the wet vegetation.

- ✓ Stay on paved pathways. If you must walk in unpaved areas, take shorter strides and pay attention to where you are stepping.

Carrying heavy or bulky loads on stairways; this behavior increases your risk of falling because it changes your center of gravity, and may obstruct your line of vision.

- ✓ Use the elevator or reduce the size of the load so that you can see over it, and still use the handrail

Not using the handrails when traveling stairs and steps; this behavior increases the probability of falling, slipping, or tripping, if you lose your balance.

- ✓ Use the handrail from start to finish. If you are concerned about sanitation, carry a small bottle of hand sanitizer or a re-sealable packet of sanitizing wipes.

Running or loping up or down stairs; this behavior can increase your risk of slipping on the steps or missing a step and falling.

- ✓ Ascend and descend stairs with caution. Always keep at least one hand on the handrail. Keep the weight on your back leg until your front foot is firmly on the next step.

Leaving unattended desk and filing cabinet drawers open; this behavior creates trip hazards that can cause serious injury.

- ✓ Close the drawer before turning your back and/or leaving the area. Even if you think you'll only be a moment, remember it only takes a moment to cause an injury.

Spilling liquids on the floor and leaving them for someone else to clean up; this behavior sets the stage for someone to slip and fall

- ✓ Immediately clean up spills. If you have to get a mop or some other clean-up equipment, ask someone to stand watch and warn others away from the spill. **Remember cleaning up chemical spills requires specific training.**

Standing on chairs, desks, or the top two steps of ladders; these behaviors are major causes of fall injuries. Chairs can be unstable, the descent from the desk is usually greater than we think, and using the top two steps of a stepladder shifts our center of gravity and increases the risk of a fall.

- ✓ Only use a stepstool or stepladder of the appropriate height. Never place a ladder in front of a closed door. Follow the directions on the ladder's label to ensure you are using it correctly.
- ✓ Do not over reach; keep your body within the rails.