

## ❖ Tips for prevention

- Make good housekeeping a priority; remove clutter, keep walkways clear of debris, and store tools and equipment properly when not in use.
- Clean up spills as soon as detected. If immediate clean up is not possible, place signs or barricades around the area until the spill can be cleaned.
- Secure raised carpet edges and make sure floor transitions are as smooth and level as possible.
- Secure cords/cables in walkways with covers or tape if they cannot be permanently rerouted.
- Avoid placing items on the floor that are similar in color to the floor. Contrast is the key to visibility.
- Slow down to negotiate turns, corners, ice, and other obstacles. Never run on icy/slippery ground.
- When walking in wet or icy conditions, shorten your stride and point your toes outward to provide additional contact with the walk surface, and, better traction.
- Wear slip-resistant shoes with good sole patterns. Replace shoes when soles are 50-75 percent worn.
- Avoid carrying loads that block your view of the floor when walking.
- Take familiar routes whenever possible and turn on lights when entering a room.
- Watch for changes in floor surfaces, such as from wood, to marble, to tile, to carpet, etc.
- Test potentially slick areas with one cautious step, then take short steps as you would on ice.

## ❖ Conclusion

Slip, trip and fall incidents occur frequently and often result in serious injury. Incidents can occur from improper or poorly maintained equipment, but most often occur from human error. Every employee should take responsibility for proper housekeeping in their work area. Most slip, trip and fall incidents can be avoided by following the guidelines and procedures as set out in this brochure.

## Slip/Trip/Fall Prevention



## ❖ A Costly Problem

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Slips, trips and falls are a major source of loss for many VML Insurance Programs members. Nationally, slips, trips and falls cause 15 percent of all accidental deaths and result in 8.6 million visits to the emergency room each year.

## ❖ Slips and Trips

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A slip occurs when there is not enough friction between the sole of the shoe and the walking surface. Wet walking surfaces are the number one cause of slips, trips and falls. However, the condition of the floor surface frequently contributes these incidents.

## ❖ Mobilize to address the problem

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The following strategies should be implemented to address slips, trips and falls.

1. Employees should wear shoes appropriate to job duties. Wearing shoes to work with heels two inches or more in height is strongly discouraged. Shoes should be worn that have at least 25 percent of the tread life left.
2. Furniture, chairs, tables, nearby equipment etc. not intended for climbing or standing on should not be used as step stools or makeshift ladders.
3. Stepstools should be available in all building departments where there is a need to climb to reach elevated objects.

4. All buildings should be inspected by location management and/or safety committee staff to identify slip, trip and fall hazards. All defects should be reported to the appropriate department for remediation.
5. All slip, trip, and fall accidents should be investigated by the location manager and/or the safety committee. All findings should be documented in order to ensure hazards are remediated and proper risk management actions taken.
6. All employees should be required to review information and tips on slip, trip and fall prevention annually.

## ❖ Falls from vehicles

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Another frequent and sometimes severe fall hazard is when entering and exiting vehicles, especially trucks and buses. This can be done safely, even when responding to an emergency without significant delay or risk of injury. Most vehicles have slip resistant steps and are equipped with handholds. If proper entry and exit procedures are practiced, slips, trips and falls can be minimized.

- Face the truck when entering or exiting.
- Use the steps - never leap up or jump down.
- Look at the ground before you step down to avoid holes or debris under foot.
- Look at the steps and entry path to assure clear access upon entry.
- Use the three-point method - two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand in contact with the vehicle during entry and exit.

- Wear shoes with a raised tread pattern and recessed instep, rather than hard, smooth soles.

## ❖ Falls from ladders

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Falls from ladders or elevated work surfaces are much less common than falls on slippery or uneven floors, but usually result in injuries that are more serious. Falls from ladders are most often caused by improper use, using a substitute, or failure to use a ladder at all.

- Make sure you only use equipment approved for climbing.
- Stepladders should be fully opened and leveled so that they do not rock or tip.
- On any ladder, never stand on the top two rungs/steps.
- In climbing ladders use three-points of contact. (Two hands, one foot or one hand, two feet)

## ❖ Falls on stairways

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Nearly 2.5 million falls occur on stairways each year. Even though stairways are generally safer than ladders, they can still become hazardous if they are poorly maintained or used improperly. Make sure that all stairways have grooved treads, abrasive strips and adequate handrails.

- Never store materials on stairways.
- Use handrails from start to finish.
- Take one step at a time.
- Never run up or down stairs.