



RISK REMINDER

January 2024

Name: _____ Company: _____

SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS IN THE WINTER



Winter's cold, rain, sleet, and snow make it easy for a person to slip or trip and fall. Slips, trips, and falls are frequent causes of incidents both on and off the job. Slips, trips, and falls constitute the majority of incidents and result in back injuries, strains and sprains, contusions, and fractures. Additionally, they cause 15% of all incidental deaths and are second only to motor vehicles as a cause of fatalities.

A slip occurs when there is too little traction or friction between the shoe and walking surface. A trip occurs when a person's foot contacts an object or drops to a lower level unexpectedly, causing them to be thrown off-balance. A fall occurs when a person is too far-off balance.

There are many situations that can cause slips, trips, and falls and they can be prevented, but only if everyone does his/her part. First, always be alert to potential hazards in unfamiliar surroundings. Spot-check walkways and work areas to be sure that no trip or slip hazards exist. The majority of slips, trips, and falls are caused by obvious hazards, most of which could have been easily avoided or corrected.

Tips for Avoiding Slips, Trips and Falls in the Winter:

- **Pay attention.** Be aware of your surroundings, especially patches of ice. Test for black ice by tapping the area with your toe before stepping down. Step straight down instead of out when exiting a vehicle or walking off a curb. Watch for imperfections on the ground.
- **Stay in well-lit areas.** Keep your lights on, inside and outside. Look for travel routes with good lighting. When possible, use walkways that are well maintained.
- **Walk slowly and take smaller steps.** This way, you can be sure you have your footing. Bend forward slightly and walk flat-footed with your center of gravity over your feet. This will help keep you stable on slippery surfaces.
- **When walking, don't carry loads that block your vision.** If you can't see where you are going, a trip and fall is inevitable.
- **Wear proper footwear.** Wear footwear that is appropriate for the conditions inside and outside. Always wear shoes with slip resistant soles. Don't wear loose shoes or shoes with high heels. Clean your shoes or switch to indoor shoes once you are inside (if you can).

There is no way to prevent falls entirely. If you do fall, you should:

- **Protect your head as much as possible.** If you hit your head during a fall, follow up with your primary care provider as soon as possible.
- **Check yourself for injuries.** If you feel injured, look for someone to help you get up. You could get hurt again if you try to get up by yourself.
- **If you are not hurt, try to get up safely.** It is safest to move slowly, get to your hands and knees, and look for a sturdy object to help pull yourself up.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. If you're in a hurry, it's okay to walk fast and take long strides down a dark path.
2. Sneakers are the preferred shoe to wear in the winter.