



Toolbox Talks for Club Employees: Slips and Falls Inside the Clubhouse

Slips and falls are a serious problem. When you consider that each hour in the United States 19 people are injured by falls, or that a fatal fall accident occurs every 37 minutes, you must agree that the fall problem is significant. Falls on the job account for about 30 percent of all injuries.

What makes falls such a problem? Most falls involve three important elements: obstacles, heights and traction. People fall off ladders or down stairways; they trip over stools and electrical cords, and they slip on water or other foreign substances. The complicated human mechanism usually allows us to maintain our balance when walking or standing. The fall problem occurs with traction is lost, unexpected obstacles are placed in our path or when we overextend the limits of our balance when working on ladders or raised platforms.

Falls can be prevented, but only if everyone on the job does his or her part. First, always be alert to potential fall hazards in unfamiliar surroundings. Experienced workers spot-check walkways and work areas to be sure that no trip or slip hazards exist. Even more importantly, when you find a hazard, make sure that something is done to correct it. The majority of falls at work are caused by obvious hazards, most of which could have been easily corrected. Water and oil spills, small objects on the floor, electrical cords and objects hanging out into walkways will eventually trip someone. Take a moment to eliminate these obvious hazards.

Some tips for avoiding falls are:

- Good housekeeping is essential. Be alert for any loose objects on walking or working surfaces.
- Never leave water or other liquid spills unattended. If they cannot be cleaned up immediately, set a barrier down so that people know about the hazard.
- Never allow an object to sit on stairways or ramps. Cartons, boxes and other obstacles are especially dangerous here.
- Report loose or damaged handrails, stairway treads, mats and walkway runners immediately to your supervisor. Sometimes even a small worn spot can cause someone to trip.
- Wear proper footwear. Synthetic rubber soles are best on oily floors and soft rubber soles are good on wet floors. Leather soles can be extremely slippery on water or oil. Please note that if you choose to wear shoes with a heel, ensure that the heel is in good repair.

- Lighting is important in walkways. Report conditions created by burned out lights or when walkways are too dark immediately to your supervisor.
- Report any floor openings that are not protected. These openings can cause very serious falls.
- When walking, do not carry loads that block your vision. If you cannot see where you are going, a trip and fall is inevitable.
- Always use hand or safety rails on stairways. It is the best way to keep your balance.

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