

Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls in the Workplace



January 2018
EHS Newsletter

About the EHS Newsletter

These newsletters are to be used as resource information for all Humboldt State personnel. Supervisors or leads can use this to discuss hazards in the workplace during pre-job briefing or safety meetings.

The intention of this is not only for the workplace, but to take this information home with you. Injuries can be prevented with thoughtful understanding of the task and implementing corrective actions.

These will occur on a monthly basis and if you have any topics of request for upcoming months you can reach us at ehs@humboldt.edu.

You can find more information about Risk Management, Emergency Management and Environmental Health & Safety here: <http://risksafety.humboldt.edu>

Slipping, tripping, and falling are common accidents in all work environments. Here a few ways of prevention for these incidents:

- Focusing on the task of walking and being aware of your surroundings. Looking for stairways, curbs, speed bumps, changes in surfaces or elevations can all prevent these incidents.
- Using ladders or stepladders properly and ensuring they are setup properly before use is critical to avoid falls from height. Ensuring the ladder is labeled and follow the directions on the labeling.
- Parking lots can have many different hazards; curbs, gravel, oil patches or a combination with the inclement weather. If we are not aware of what others are doing and where we are walking, then slips, trips, and falls can occur.
- Using handrails when traversing up or down stairways is very important, especially during inclement weather or rain. Keep one hand free for the handrail when using stairways when feasible.
- Using caution when walking, take your time. Avoid rushing or hurrying, give yourself enough time and understand that your safety and the safety of others is very important.
- Reporting all unsafe conditions to your supervisor or RM&SS in a timely manner, so the area or situation can be evaluated.
- Wear the appropriate footwear for your working environment. You may consider wearing alternate footwear to and from your vehicle for the inclement weather normally in the winter months.

Top 10 Slip, Trip & Fall Hazards

1. Contaminants on the floor
2. Poor drainage
3. Indoor—uneven surfaces
4. Outdoor—uneven surfaces
5. Weather conditions
6. Inadequate lighting
7. Staircases
8. Stepstools and ladders
9. Trip hazards (loose cords & cluttered walkways)
10. Improper use of floor mats

Source: NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health)

Did You Know?

- ◆ From 2014 to 2015, there was an 11% increase in pedestrian fatalities in traffic accidents.
- ◆ Slips and falls account for over 1 million emergency room visits annually
- ◆ Slips and falls are responsible for more than 25% of the work-related injuries in 2016 in the United States at 230,000 incidents
- ◆ Fractures are the most serious consequences of falls and occur in 5% of fall incidents
- ◆ Slips and falls are second in lost work-day injuries from 2012-2016, behind only overexertion injuries
- ◆ Slips & falls are the leading cause of workers' compensation claims and are the leading cause of occupational injury for people aged 55 years and older
- ◆ Average days away from work for a slip or fall is 12 days!
- ◆ Floors and flooring materials contribute directly to more than 2 million fall injuries each year
- ◆ Compensation and medical costs associated with employee slip and fall accidents is approximately \$70 billion annually

Students and visitors are also at risk of slipping, tripping, and falling in our facilities unless we take proper precautions to protect them and ourselves!

References:

National Safety Council Injury Facts, 2014 Ed.
US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016)

What to do when encountering slip, trip, or fall hazards?

These incidents should be reported to your supervisor and discussed. You can report these hazards to EHS on our website here: <https://risksafety.humboldt.edu/safety-suggestionaction-form>

The issues will be relayed to Facilities Management depending on the hazard significance and the likelihood of occurrence.

EHS Phone Numbers: (707) 826-5711 and 826-3302



SAFE STEPLADDER USE



Follow manufacturer instructions and ladder labels



Face the ladder while climbing up or down



Keep slippery materials away from ladders



Use a barricade to keep traffic away



Only put ladders on a stable, level surface



Maintain 3 points of contact (two hands and a foot, or two feet and a hand)



Check for, and avoid, overhead power lines

OSHA.GOV