

MAFES Dawg Tracks



August 16, 2010 Preventing Injuries from Slips, Trips, Falls



Slips, trips and falls continue to be one of the major culprits for injuries in our university system, especially in our agriculture sector. The Occupational Safety and Health Association (OSHA) states that slips, trips, and falls constitute the majority of workplace accidents. In 2002, 37 percent of workplace injuries were slips, trips and falls.

Falls, fatal and non-fatal, are serious concerns in the workplace taking 715 lives and causing 313,335 injuries involving a work absence each year. Most slips, trips, and fall injuries are preventable if general precautions and safety measures are taken.

SLIPS –

A slip occurs when there is too little traction or friction between the shoe and walking surface.

Some causes of slips include:

- Wet walking surfaces
- Oil or other slippery debris on the floor
- Environmental factors (ice, snow, or mud)
- Materials such as scrap metal, wood or cloth on the floor
- Inappropriate soles on footwear
- Poor lighting
- Personal factors such as distractions and/or physical conditions.

TRIPS –

A trip occurs when a person's foot contacts a lower level unexpectedly and they are thrown off balance.

Some causes of trips include:

- Cords or hoses on the floor
- Uneven or damaged walking surfaces
- Debris or materials left in walking areas
- Poor lighting

- Forward view obstructed by materials carried by the person
- Personal factors (distractions, physical conditions)
- Unanchored or uneven mats
- Loose or poor fitting footwear
- Broken or damaged sidewalks or walkways

TIPS FOR REDUCING THE POTENTIAL FOR SLIPS, TRIPS, OR FALLS –

- **Practice good housekeeping** – Keep work areas clean and free of spills or debris.
- **Wear proper footwear** – Anticipate environmental conditions (ice, snow, rain) and working environment. Use footwear that reflects these conditions.
- **Change light bulbs when needed** – Report flickering or burned out bulbs to maintain an acceptably lighted work area.
- **Use a flashlight** – If you will be walking through or working in a dimly lit environment, have your own source of light to help you identify hazardous areas.
- **Be a cautious carrier** – Don't carry a load that will obstruct your view while walking and make sure that you have a clear walkway to utilize before picking up large objects.
- **Take your time** – If you anticipate slip or trip hazards, walk with caution and make wide turns at corners.
- **Learn to walk** – Adjust your walking speed and pace that will be suitable for the walking surface, use rails or other stable objects to help your balance. Walk with your feet pointed slightly out, keeping your center of balance under you and use your feet as probes to detect possible slip or trip hazards.

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Excerpts:

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