

JANUARY

SAFETY TALK

Right behind overexertion, Falls – on the same level and from elevations – are the second leading cause of injuries in municipalities. Nearly one-quarter of all injuries in municipalities are caused by falls.

Of the categorized statistics, the three leading occupations experiencing falls are public works, firefighters and recreation staff, in that order. This is consistent with the overall injury statistics in municipalities.

69% of falls result in strains and sprains to the back and lower extremities.

So. How do falls happen? Most of the falls are on the same level – from tripping or slipping.

Slips happen when there isn't enough friction or traction between your feet and the surface you're walking on. Common causes of slips are:

- wet or oily floors
- spills
- loose or unanchored mats
- flooring with different levels of traction

Trips happen when your foot strikes an object, causing you to lose your balance. Workers trip for a variety of reasons, including:

- uneven ground/surfaces
- clutter in walkways
- poor lighting

FALLS: SECOND LEADING CAUSE OF INJURIES IN MUNICIPALITIES

Falls happen in every occupation. To reduce the risk of falls, follow these few suggestions:

1. pay attention to your surroundings
2. walk at a pace that is appropriate to those surroundings
3. walk with your feet pointed slightly outwards
4. make wide turns when walking around corners
5. use handrails on stairs
6. use three points of contact on ladders (2 feet and 1 hand, 1 foot and 2 hands)



To be proactive in reducing future injuries from slips, trips and falls your organization should take the following steps:

1. Review the workplaces' history with respect to slips, trips and falls
2. Conduct new risk assessments
3. Review existing controls and implement new controls if necessary
4. Raise awareness of the risk of injury with staff
5. Clearly communicate a hazard reporting process

In addition, ensure all staff know they are responsible for their safety and the safety of their fellow workers.

If you see a slip or trip hazard, fix it!