

# JANUARY *Safety Talk*

## Topic: Preventing Falls on Stairs

The stairs in your workplace or your home can be dangerous!

Most of the falls on stairs can be prevented. As with any workplace hazard, understanding that there is a hazard is the first step.



### Why do people fall?

Health, environmental and behavioural reasons are all contributing factors to falls on stairs.

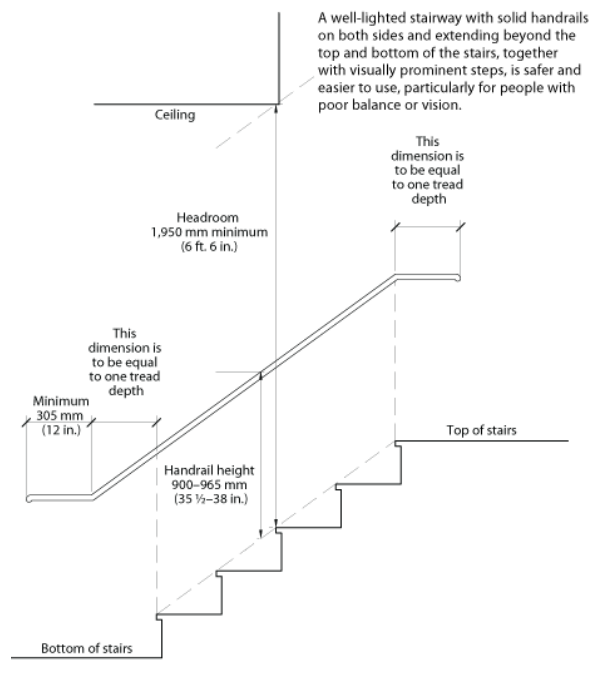
- Health factors include reduced vision, weakness, drowsiness and loss of balance.
- Environmental factors include poor stairway design, poor maintenance, non-existent or dysfunctional handrails, poor lighting and tread surfaces.
- Behavioural factors include lack of concentration, carrying something while walking on stairs, unsuitable footwear, and hurrying.

### What are the consequences from falling?

Physical consequences can include soft tissue injuries, broken bones, and even death. A worker fell down stairs in a non-municipal workplace in 2013 and died a few weeks later from complications related to the injury.

### How do you eliminate falls?

Good design of stairways can substantially reduce the risk of mis-stepping.



Even the best design cannot eliminate the human factors (health and behaviour) that contribute to falls on stairs.

Factor in fall	Strategy to prevent
Rushing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take your time and be extra cautious</li> <li>• Always use handrails</li> </ul>
Lack of attention (i.e. some people fall at the second to last step because they think they have already reached the bottom of the stairs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid being distracted when using a stairway</li> <li>• Make sure your perception of the stairway is accurate, especially in beginning or ending stairway use</li> </ul>
Low or reduced vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove your reading glasses when going up or down stairs</li> <li>• Take extra care when wearing bifocal or progressive eyeglasses</li> <li>• Ensure there is adequate lighting on the stairs</li> </ul>
Carrying objects on the stairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid carrying objects on stairs, if possible, especially if they block your view of the stairs</li> </ul>