

# PREVENTING SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS

## **DON'T BE IN A HURRY**

Trips and falls often occur while people are in a hurry, because they often take short cuts and don't pay attention to what they are doing. We all have tried to jump across an obstacle instead of walking "the long way around" to our destination. These types of acts are unsafe. Learn to slow down and walk sure-footedly by avoiding potentially hazardous shortcuts.

## **PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR STEP**

Avoid injuries by paying attention to where you are walking. Learning to recognize hazards and avoid potential hazards saves time, money and injury. As mentioned previously, resist the temptation to take short-cuts because short-cuts are usually comprised of objects or routes not designed for foot traffic and often consist of unstable, shaky or slippery surfaces.

## **CLEAN UP SPILLS**

Slippery surfaces often don't appear dangerous until you happen to step on them, and then it's too late. Clean up grease, water and other forms of spills as you notice them. Cover icy and greasy spots with sand or dirt or other types of absorbent material.

## **PRACTICE WALKING SAFELY**

If you cannot avoid walking on slippery or wet surfaces, then you should practice walking safely across them. Don't try to run, jump or slide across these slick surfaces. Instead, take slow, short steps with your toes pointed slightly outward. For additional balance, keep your hands at your sides (not in your pockets) to support you if you begin to fall. Remember that a freshly polished floor can also be very slick even though it doesn't usually appear hazardous.

## **USE NONSKID SHOES AND SURFACES WHEN AVAILABLE**

If you work in an area that has slippery surfaces, such as some marble, tile, or concrete floors, wears shoes that have slip-resistant soles. Ask your supervisor about the correct shoe for your job. Keep your shoes free from grease and oil. On large walkways, use mats or rough grade coverings to assist in minimizing falls.

## **MAINTAIN PROPER LIGHTING**

Inadequate lighting can camouflage what is in your way, so replace light fixtures or bulbs that don't work. When you enter darkened rooms always turn on the light first, even if you stay only for a moment. Keep walkways clear of obstructions in areas that have poor lighting.

## **STAIR SAFETY**

Stairs that are too steep or not steep enough can create the potential for trips and falls. Because it is very easy to lose your footing while climbing stairs, walk up and down stairs slowly. Be cautious of worn or broken steps, and of insufficient lighting that may make it difficult to see properly. Never run up or down stairs, and avoid skipping steps. If you have to carry a load while climbing stairs, carry the load so it doesn't block your vision, and keep one hand free, if possible, to hold onto the wall railing.