



## Toolbox Talk: Slips, Trips, and Falls

### Introduction/Overview:

Do you remember the idiom that refers to the difficulty of multitasking? "You can't walk and chew gum at the same time." This idiom has a lot of truth to it when talking about bipedal creatures. One of the most common causes of injuries that people experience is slips, trips, and falls (STF). Nowadays, this idiom could be changed to, "You can't walk and talk on the smartphone at the same time."

### Statistics:

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) for the year 2018, American workers experienced [240,160 injuries and 791 fatalities](#) due to slips, trips, and falls. These numbers reflected an increase from 2017 in injuries and a decrease in deaths from 2017.

### Talking Points:

The below talking points will cover [tips on how to stay upright both at home and at work](#).

- Maintain floors and stairwells in a clean and clutter-free state.
- Encourage employees to use handrails when using the stairs.
- Ensure cords never cross walking areas. If this cannot be avoided, use brightly colored cord protectors.
- Ensure employees wear appropriate footwear for the work environment.
- Train employees on the importance of maintaining footwear.
- Ensure indoor and outdoor lighting illuminate areas that customers and employees frequent. Use proper lights such as spotlights or illuminated steps.
- Place warning signage in areas where problem areas may exist. An example is uneven steps, entrance to an elevator and loose rocks. High-reflective non-skid tape is another solution.
- Provide step stools and ladders so employees will not be tempted to use less secure means to retrieve items placed up on shelves.
- Conduct regular inspections of the work area and be sure to check the floors for damage or conditions that may result in a slips, trips, and falls hazard. If damaged areas are found, barricade the area until repairs can be made.
- Keep in mind some flooring material becomes slippery when wet. Surfaces such as tile and ceramic may become very slick when wet. If rugs are used, be sure the rug has a non-skid backing or pad underneath it.
- Carpet can develop ridges after a few years of use. High traffic areas should be repaired.

Developed by:

- Always watch out for each other. If you spill or discover a spill, clean it up. If, for some reason, you are unable to clean up the spill, barricade around the spill and notify the appropriate person.
  - Never walk distracted, put the phone down and pay attention to your surroundings both inside and outside of your work environment.
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### **Final Thoughts:**

Keep in mind that slips, trips, and falls often result in injuries ranging from minor to fatal. Always be aware of the walking surfaces and never walk distracted. Just like distracted driving, distracted walking can lead to a major life-altering experience.

**NOTE:** Always promote discussion with the attendees. If a question comes up that no one in attendance can answer, please contact OWC or the Loss Control Innovations consultants for assistance.

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### **References:**

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

[Latest numbers of injury and fatality rates for Slips, Trips, and Falls](#)

[10 Ways to Reduce Slips, Trips, and Falls in your Business](#)