

Topic: Slips, Trips and Falls

Introduction: Slips, trips and falls are a major cause of workplace injuries in industry. Because of this recognized fact, there are several OSHA standards that address this issue with specific requirements that are designed to minimize injuries from slips, trips and falls.

Goal: To highlight the various OSHA requirements designed to ensure safe walking and working surfaces and to conduct an inspection of the facility to identify and correct substandard conditions.

Standards and Facts: No single standard addresses these hazards exclusively. OSHA's general requirements for walking and working surfaces, as outlined in 29 CFR 1910.22 state:

- Housekeeping is to be clean, orderly and sanitary.
- Floors are to be clean and dry.
- Aisles and passageways are to have sufficient clearance. They are to be kept clear, without obstructions that could create a hazard.
- Permanent aisles are to be marked.

Once you determine that your surfaces are safe, a method of fall protection must be selected if a fall hazard is present. Fall hazards may include holes and openings in the floor, openings in walls, or open sided floors, platforms, and runways. You can abate these fall hazards by following the fall protection requirements outlined in 29 CFR 1910.23, which may include installing:

- A floor hole cover.
- A floor opening cover, such as a manhole cover.
- Standard railings on all exposed sides of an opening, except where there is an entrance to a ramp, stairway or fixed ladder.
- Standard railings with a toe board, when falling materials would create a hazard.
- Standard stair railings or standard handrails.

In situations where employees are exposed to falls from an elevated surface of four feet or more above the adjacent floor or ground level, you must provide personal protective equipment (PPE), such as a body harness, or other effective fall protection, such as a guardrail system, as required by 29 CFR 1910.132(a).

Recommended Action: The most widely accepted way to identify slip, trip and fall hazards is to conduct inspections. Therefore, it is recommended that you utilize the **Safety Check List** from your **GAWDA OSHA Manual** behind **Section 8** to assist in this hazard recognition inspection. The specific sections that you should consider using for this inspection include:

- General work environment - Page 7
- Walkways - Page 8
- Floor and wall openings - Page 9
- Stairs and stairways -Page 10
- Elevated Surfaces - Page 11
- Exiting or egress - Page 11
- Exit doors - Page 12

