

## LADDER SAFETY BASICS

Using a ladder can be risky business. Step up with these tips in mind.

- Read the manufacturer's instructions for proper use, maximum load rating, highest standing levels and other guidelines.
- Pick the right ladder for the job. For example, don't use a metal ladder near power lines or electrical equipment.
- Inspect the ladder for damage, loose parts or wet surfaces before you use it, and don't take chances.
- Place your ladder on a flat, level surface. Avoid blocking an entryway or doorway.
- Face the ladder when climbing up and down.
- Maintain three points of contact with the ladder (2 feet/1 hand or 2 hands/1 foot) at all times.
- Keep your feet firmly positioned on the rungs.
- Always reposition ladders close to your work; don't attempt to overreach or "walk" the ladder while you are on it.
- Never stand on the top of the ladder, the highest rung or the material tray.



## WORKING AT HEIGHTS?

It's up to you to identify existing and potential hazards when it comes to working in high places. You might not think twice about climbing the ladder at home, or perhaps you forget to double-check all safety precautions at the worksite. Fact is, falls from heights can be fatal or can leave you permanently disabled. **Think safety first** before you go up, and make sure fall protection systems are properly in place and secure.

## MORE FALL PROTECTION TIPS

**Exercise.** Staying in shape improves your strength, balance, coordination and flexibility, reducing your risk of injury. Aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week. Find a buddy to help you stick with a routine. Get your doctor's OK first, especially if you are over 40 and have been inactive for some time, or if you have an existing health condition.



**Fall-proof your bathroom.** Install a night-light; use bathroom rugs with nonskid backing; put a rubber mat or nonskid strips on the floor of the bathtub and shower.

**Get your vision checked.** Many falls are caused by poor vision. Have your eyes checked regularly and wear your glasses or contact lenses.

**Brighten the lights.** When moving from dark areas into light or vice versa, take it slowly. It takes your eyes a few minutes to adjust to the light change. At home, keep staircases and outdoor walking paths well lit.

**Consider health conditions.** Some eye and ear disorders diminish your balance, increasing your risk of falling. If you're feeling "out of step," talk to your health care provider.

**Know your medication.** Read all medication labels for side effects, and be careful if they list dizziness, drowsiness or loss of coordination.

**Keep everyday items within easy reach.** The less ladder and stepstool climbing, the better (at any age).

**Final thought:** You can take all the right precautions and falls can still happen. In this fast-paced world, some of the best precautions you can take are simply to slow down, pay attention and watch where you're walking. Many falls happen when people are walking fast or running and not watching.

# WATCH OUT!

STOP SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS



## FALLS ARE SERIOUS BUSINESS

A fall can change your life. A broken bone or chronic back problem caused by a simple slip or trip can sideline you with pain, limited mobility and costly medical bills. The worst falls — from heights, for example — can be fatal or can leave you paralyzed.

Falls seldom just happen. Most can be prevented. In this fast-paced world, you can't afford to take chances. **Slow down, and stop slips, trips and falls.** The tips in this brochure can help.



### 3 Universal Fall Hazards

Fall hazards may be easy to overlook. Many of the same hazards exist at home and at work. **Look for:**

- 1. Clutter.** Boxes and supplies, tools, shoes, toys — indoors or out, you name it, if it's in a pathway on the floor or ground, it's sure to cause a trip or slip, which can lead to a fall. Keep walkways clear of clutter.
- 2. Cords.** A foot has nowhere to go once it gets tangled up in electrical or phone cords. Keep cords off the floor at home. If you notice cords crossing pathways at work, let your building supervisor know immediately.
- 3. Slippery surfaces.** Some surfaces offer more traction than others (rough concrete versus waxed floors, for example). This is where the right footwear comes in. It's best to wear shoes or work boots with nonskid soles. Make sure to clean up spills properly and promptly when they occur (or alert maintenance to the problem). At home or at work, take care when walking on slippery or wet surfaces.



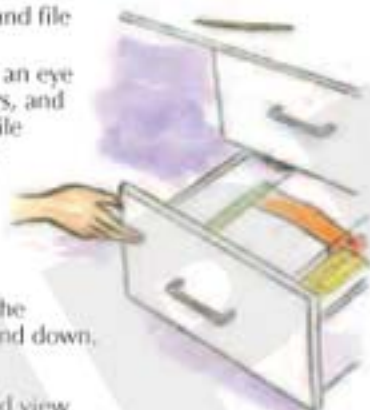
Falls can happen anytime and anyplace, but most falls occur in the home during everyday activities.

## Are You Headed for a Fall?

Who hasn't tripped or stumbled at home or on the street? It's no less common at work. Of the more than 3 million disabling injuries each year in the workplace, more than 1 in 10 are due to slips, trips and falls. **Here are some common fall hazards — and how to prevent them.**

**Hazard:** drawers and file cabinets left open

**Prevention:** Keep an eye out for open drawers, and close drawers and file cabinets when they are not in use.



**Hazard:** stairs, ramps and escalators

**Prevention:** Use the handrail going up and down. Watch your step.

**Hazard:** obstructed view

**Prevention:** Avoid carrying bulky objects that you can't see over.

**Hazard:** reaching for items on shelves

**Prevention:** Don't use your desk, a box, a wastebasket or an office chair to stand on. Use an appropriate ladder or stepstool.

**Hazard:** supplies stored in walkways and aisles

**Prevention:** Store supplies away from walkways and aisles. Remove clutter and keep these areas clear.

**Hazard:** wet, snowy, icy, slippery or greasy surfaces

**Prevention:** Wear shoes or boots with nonskid soles. Take shorter steps when walking on slippery surfaces. Shovel, scrape or spread deicer to remove snow and ice and make the surface less slick.



## More Slip, Trip and Fall Hazards

- Uneven floor
- Missing floor tiles
- Wrinkled floor mats
- Low visibility due to burned-out lights or inadequate lighting
- Debris and equipment from maintenance work and repairs
- Broken stair handrails
- Damaged treads on stairs and ramps

**The bottom line:** Stay alert. If you see a hazard, take steps to correct it if it's within your control. At work, report a hazard immediately if you can't handle it or you're unsure about what to do. You may save someone (perhaps even yourself) from injury.

**Believe it or not,** there are safer ways to fall than others. If you find yourself falling, tuck your chin in, turn your head and throw an arm up to avoid landing on your head. While falling, twist or roll your body to the side so you're more likely to land on your buttocks, rather than on your back. Don't try to break the fall with your hands or elbows. The objective is to spread the impact of the fall, rather than concentrate it in one area.

## 3 SPECIAL FALL PREVENTION PRECAUTIONS

... for on the production floor and in the field

- 1.** Don't have passengers ride on forklifts, tractors, mowers or other machinery.
- 2.** Whenever mounting or climbing up on a machine or vehicle, get a good handhold first. When getting out of a truck or off a piece of machinery, always step down facing the machine, not away from it.
- 3.** If you work on or near a loading dock, watch your step and look out for others. Always use designated ramps, stairs or ladders for entering and leaving.