

ROLLING THE DICE WITH SAFETY?



Everyone has a built in level of risk they are comfortable with. While some may not be high risk takers, the less the penalty, the greater risk they may be willing to take. Driving is a good example. Most people don't show up to a drivers ed class with a cell phone and sandwich demonstrating their prowess driving, talking and eating at the same time. Over time, however, they can become complacent, thinking that driving is a secondary or subconscious task and they can add other activities during this often mundane event. The longer they have success avoiding "accidents" while driving like this, the more comfortable they are at taking the risk. The question you need to ask yourself is: Should you be willing to roll the dice hoping that your number will not come up? An even better question is:

How can you address the hazards in what you do in order to reduce or eliminate the safety risks/impacts?

With this in mind, let's take a look at some hazards you may encounter both on and off the job and ways you can address those hazards.

Slips, Trips and Falls!

Walking is a regular part of daily activities for most people. We will walk around the house, job, community and shopping malls. Walking is definitely one of those things we do often, without even thinking about it. It's no wonder that we frequently find ourselves complacent and oblivious to the walking and working hazards around us. Slips, trips and falls are a major causes for injuries. We need to be more careful or we will find that we have rolled the dice and it is our turn for an injury. Just how bad is this slip, trip and fall hazard? The National Safety Council Injury Facts for 2004 states that there were over 300,000 work related lost time injuries and 7.4 million non-fatal falls treated in emergency rooms in 2002. The fact is, millions of people are impacted by slips, trips and falls every year. It is time that we recognize the severity of this problem and work to minimize or eliminate the hazards we face daily. With that in mind, let's find out what we can do to avoid being a slip, trip and fall statistic.



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Slips, Trips and Falls! (continued)

Step One:

Admit that slips, trips and falls are a problem, in large part because of decisions we make. Decisions to ignore common hazards, to roll the dice and say it won't happen to you this time.

Step Two:

Keep your eyes open and be on the watch for slip, trip and fall hazards. Don't take walking for granted. Address or avoid common hazards like wet or slippery surfaces, trash and clutter or uneven/unstable walking and working conditions. Maintaining focus on the task at hand is imperative when trying to work safely. No one can perform tasks mindlessly without placing themselves in needless risk. Having a mindset where we are constantly aware of what we are doing and how to do it safely will provide a solid platform on which to avoid injuries.

Step Three:

Correct the hazards you can and barricade/mark the ones you cannot.

- Survey your work area before you begin.
- Select a path that keeps you out of harms way.
- Clean and/or remove clutter from your work area.
- Wear appropriate footwear for the conditions you are working in and make sure your footwear is in good condition.
- Remove the hazards whenever possible. When hazards cannot be removed, be sure you have a plan to deal with them safely. This may include but is not limited to:
 - Wearing additional PPE
 - Using a broader, more stable stance.
 - Taking smaller steps.
 - Marking/barricading hazard areas to warn others.

Don't take risks in this common area of injury. Keep your mind on the task and address or avoid slip, trip and fall hazards both at home and at work.

What are some of the slips, trips or falls that happened in your workplace during the last year?

Safety Meeting Attendance

Subject: Walking and Working Surfaces Date: _____

Instructor: _____

Instruction Notes: Take some pictures of good and bad walking and working surfaces on the job site. Describe the hazards and ask what should be done to correct them.

Follow-up Action Items: _____

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| 1. _____ | 17. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 18. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 19. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 20. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 21. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 22. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 23. _____ |
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| 9. _____ | 25. _____ |
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| 11. _____ | 27. _____ |
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| 16. _____ | 32. _____ |