

SAFETY TIP OF THE WEEK

ZERO HARM

FALLS ARE A LEADING CAUSE OF INJURY

In case you think you are not a likely candidate for a workplace fall injury, think again. Falls remain the leading cause of injuries in workplaces. Only motor vehicles cause more accidental deaths than falls do. Most of these workplace falls are from the same level, as opposed to a fall from heights. That means they are mostly the kind of fall which occurs when you slip or trip. **BUT** even though falls from height (above 6 feet) are less frequent the severity of the injury is likely to be much worse.

Follow these tips to reduce your chances of a fall:

- Keep traffic areas and stairways free of clutter such as storage boxes, trash, hoses, cables and cords.
- Look out for fall hazards such as loose tile or carpets, broken railings and stair risers. Report any such problems so they can be repaired.
- Use adequate lighting. Report any burned-out lights. Turn on lights before entering an area.
- Use the handrail when traveling up or down the stairs.
- When carrying a load, make sure you can see over or around it.
- **Don't tip back in a chair. Chairs should have five legs to prevent tipping accidents.**
- **Don't run on staircases or along walkways.**
- Do not jump down from high places such as vehicle cabs, tailgates or loading docks.
- Watch out for unexpected hazards such as unguarded floor openings. Report them so they can be correctly covered and guarded.
- Take extra care on any surfaces which might be slippery or rough. Take small steps and walk slowly.
- When working on slippery surfaces, or when the weather is icy, wear shoes with non-slip soles.
- When spills occur report them right way. This includes spills of grease or oil, or water and other substances. It also includes the accumulations of ice, water and mud which are tracked in from the outdoors.
- Newly waxed and high gloss floors represent particular hazards, so take care. Pay attention to signs such as "Caution, Wet Floor."
- Keep drawers of desks, cupboards and filing cabinets closed so that someone cannot fall over them.
- Do not stand on makeshift platforms such as a chair on top of a desk. Instead, correctly use a stepstool, ladder or scaffold.
- Never stand on the top few rungs of a straight ladder or a stepladder.
- Do not lean out from a ladder.
- Extension ladders are a two man job at Balfour Beatty

If you do begin to fall, you might be able to save yourself from injury if you remember these tips:

- Relax. Bend your arms and legs. Try to sink to the floor.
- Catch your fall with your hand instead of your back or your head. Hit the ground rolling.
- If you think you might be injured, do not move. Wait for help instead.

Remember, falls cause the majority of workplace injuries. Work safely and pay attention.