Avoid Slips, Trips and Falls

WHAT'S AT STAKE
A fall at work can put you out of commission. Weeks in pain, months in a cast or years in a wheelchair can be the result of a simple slip, trip or fall.

WHAT'S THE DANGER
Falls are among the leading causes of death in the workplace. Even a fall from the same level - instead of a fall from a height - can cause a fatal or crippling injury.

EXAMPLE
One of the major causes of falls is tripping over an obstacle. The other major cause is slipping.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF
Here are some suggestions to prevent tripping and slipping accidents:

- Slow down. Many falls occur when a person walks too fast through the work area. Don't run.
- Watch where you are going. Don't assume a walkway is clear. Watch for clutter on the floor and for unexpected changes in the floor level, such as a step up.
- Wear well-fitting shoes with a low heel. Keep laces tied to prevent tripping.
- It's possible to trip over your own clothing. Baggy or flared pants are sometimes to blame.
- Maintain adequate lighting in the areas where you walk. Hallways, stairways, warehouse aisles and other traffic areas should be bright enough to see where you are going.
- Keep your hands free when you walk, to help you catch your balance if you start to fall. Don't walk with your hands in your pockets.
- Do not leave equipment, tools or materials on the floor.
- Don't obstruct traffic aisles with materials or equipment.
- Do not allow cords, cables or hoses to cross walkways.
- Always close drawers, even if they are in an area where you wouldn't expect someone to trip over them.
- Don't leave items on stairs, even for just a moment.
- Watch for hazards such as loose floor tile, loose carpeting and broken stair surfaces. Report these defects immediately so they can be repaired.
- If you are carrying something, make sure you can see over it or around it.
- Stay alert. Your chances for a tripping accident - or any accident - are greater if you are tired or distracted.

FINAL WORD
Falls are a leading cause of workplace injury and death. They also cause a great deal of suffering. Take fall hazards seriously, and don't let them trip you up.
Why risk it all by having a fall?