

Slips, Trips and Falls

There are two kinds of falls—same level or from height.

Same level falls can be caused by slippery and uneven surfaces, debris and tripping hazards, dark and obstructed pathways, and unsuitable footwear.

Falling from heights can be caused by working where there is a chance of falling more than three metres.



What the law says

Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) requires that employers take every reasonable precaution to protect workers, provide information and instruction, and ensure that workers properly use or wear the required equipment. Employers, supervisors and workers can be prosecuted for not complying with the law.

Refer to industry-specific regulations for details on legislative compliance. Your health and safety association can provide this information to you.

How this hazard can affect your business

- Each year there are about 17,000 lost-time injuries due to falls in the workplace*
- 65% of all fall-related injuries are from "same level"*
- One in five lost-time injuries result from falls*
- Every year about 20 people die in Ontario because of workplace falls*
- 80 workers are injured every day because of a fall—that's one every 20 minutes*
- An average WSIB claim is \$11,771; factor in other costs like lost productivity and staff replacement, and the cost can be as much as four times more—approximately \$59,000 per injury*
- with a profit margin of 5%, sales/services required to cover the total cost of one injury equals about \$1.2 million*

(Source: *WSIB "Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls in the Workplace")

What you can do

- Have a company policy in place that clearly outlines the rules for housekeeping, lighting and inspections
- Ensure that required personal protective equipment, and other equipment, is in good repair and used properly
- Assist supervisors in meeting their obligation to ensure the rules are followed
- Provide proper training to workers on how to clean up spills, the proper use of fall protection equipment, the use of proper guard rails and covers over holes, etc.
- Provide continuous follow-up to make sure that the rules are adequate and are being followed, and to identify what needs improvement
- Investigate all incidents to determine how to eliminate the cause