

## **BASICS OF PREVENTING SLIPS & FALLS**

When thinking of preventing slips & falls, one often visualizes body harnesses or other fall protection gear for window washers or painters located 6' or more above the ground. It is difficult to take the hazards of such work for granted; a fall from the 79th story is dramatic. However, people often take hazards leading to slips & falls when walking for granted; stumbling in a warehouse or at a jobsite is embarrassing, not dramatic. Stumbling may be embarrassing; it may also be **deadly**. National Safety Council information shows 13,450 Americans **died** from falls in 1994. Slip & fall accidents occurring at the same floor or walking surface level make up almost 16% of lost-time accidents & cost an average \$28,000.

### **Common slip & fall hazards:**

- Water, snow, ice, grease, cooking oil, or other slippery material on floor/walking surface
- Poor lighting; people unable to see where they are walking
- People carrying large objects that obstruct their view of where they are walking
- Uneven walking surface (*e.g. warped floor, rise in floor, warped step, broken cement, potholes*)
- Rug edge sticking up
- No handrail on stairs; stairs slippery
- Workers wearing slick-soled shoes
- Non-slip wax not used on floor
- No signs used to warn about wet floor when cleaning or during wet weather
- No floor mats used in areas where floor is often wet
- Power cords, pneumatic hoses, & other items strewn about the walkway

### **Easy, inexpensive ways to prevent/reduce slips & falls:**

- Clean up water & other spills; remove snow & ice; clean up other slippery materials
- Provide adequate lighting in stairways & walkways
- Reduce size of load; instruct workers to carry smaller loads or seek assistance
- Repair warped, raised, broken surface of walkway; repair potholes; if repair is not possible, mark changes of elevation with signs or contrasting color
- Secure edge of rug; replace rug
- Install handrail on stairs; install non-slip coating to stairs
- Provide footwear with non-slip soles or cleats to workers; provide non-slip or cleated overshoes
- Use non-slip floor wax/coating
- Post signs to warn workers, customers, & others about wet floor
- Place non-slip floor mats where floor is often wet (*e.g. produce dept., dishwashing stations*)
- Keep cords/hoses out of walkway; install electric or pneumatic outlets closer to work area to eliminate need for extension cords or extra long hoses

A safety equipment supplier can help you select appropriate harnesses & other gear to protect your employees who work at heights. Such supplier & possibly a shoe retailer can

## *Gaslamp Insurance*

739 4th Avenue, suite 206  
San Diego, CA 92101  
(619) 238-4367  
(619) 238-4387 fax  
[www.gaslampinsurance.com](http://www.gaslampinsurance.com)

License OD80816

help you select non-slip footwear. A supplier of janitorial supplies & possibly a floor covering retailer can help you select non-slip wax & floor mats. Your workers may offer ideas to help you prevent or reduce slips & falls, as well.