

## Slips, Trips and Falls

### Fall prevention tips

- Clean up all spills immediately
- Stay off freshly mopped floors
- Secure electrical and phone cords out of traffic areas
- Remove small throw rugs or use non-skid mats to keep them from slipping
- Keep frequently used items in easily reachable areas
- Wear shoes with good support and slip-resistant soles
- Arrange furniture to provide open walking pathways
- Keep drawers and cabinet doors closed at all times
- Install handrails on all staircases on both sides
  
- Remove tripping hazards (paper, boxes, books, clothes, toys, shoes) from stairs and walkways
- If you have young children, install gates at the top and bottom of stairs (unlatch the gate in order to pass – don't climb over them)
- Ensure adequate lighting both indoor and outdoors
- Remove debris from exterior walkways
- Adjust gutter downspouts to drive water away from pathways
- Periodically check the condition of walkways and steps, and repair damages immediately
- Never stand on a chair, table or other surface on wheels

### Ladder safety

- Always keep at least three points of contact with the ladder (i.e. two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand)
- Place the base on a firm, solid surface
- A straight or extension ladder should be placed 1 foot away from the surface it rests against for every 4 feet of ladder height
- When you climb, always face the ladder and grip the rungs, not the side rails
  
- Climb down a ladder one rung at a time
- Do not climb with tools in hand – use a tool belt
- Keep your body between the ladder side rails when climbing
- Do not lean or overreach – reposition the ladder closer to the work instead
- Tie down a ladder when using it outdoors and do not use it in windy or inclement weather

The dangers of slips, trips and falls

Falls are the third leading cause of unintentional death in the U.S., accounting for nearly 32,000 deaths in 2014, according to Injury Facts 2016®. The risk of falling rises with age.

No matter what time of year...

Wear footwear with rubber soles and wider heel for better support. Flatter soled footwear without a defined heel is your best choice as your entire foot is in contact with the ground. Wear footwear that you can lace up. For the best support, an ankle boot that laces up provides the best stability for your feet. Don't be in a hurry. Give yourself plenty of time to get to where you are going. Concentrate on where you are walking and pay attention to changes in sidewalk and road conditions. Be aware of the effects of fatigue and how it can reduce awareness.

#### Common locations for falls

- Doorways
- Ramps
- Cluttered hallways
- Areas with heavy traffic
- Uneven surfaces
- Areas prone to wetness or spills
- Unguarded heights
- Unstable work surfaces
- Ladders
- Stairs