Preventing Slips, Trips & Falls

Healthcare Occupational Safety Center & Health Workers Working Healthy

District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund, 100 S Broad St., 10 Floor, Philadelphia, PA

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Preventing Slips, Trips, & Falls Learning Objectives

- Definitions
- Causes:
  - Environment
  - Equipment/Tools
  - Work Practices
  - Individual
- Hierarchy of Controls
- Using Safety Checklists- Inside and Out
- OSHA & the Right to Participate in Safety Activities

Did you know?

- US Workplace fatalities in 2013?
  - **4,405 workplace deaths**
- US Workplace fatalities from slip **trip falls in 2013?**
  - **16% or 705 workplace deaths**

All data from BLS news release USDL-14-2246, on statistics from 2013

- US Workplace injuries resulting in days lost, in 2013:
  - **1,162,210 reportable injuries**
- US Workplace injuries from slip trip falls in 2013:
  - **296,130 reportable injuries**
  - Injuries from falls that happened on the 'same level' in 2013?
    - **185,230 injuries**

Costs of Slip, Trip, Fall Injuries

For Employee:

- Lost wages & out-of-pocket expenses
- Medical costs
  - Direct and indirect
- Pain and suffering
- Disability & loss
  - Could be temporary or permanent
- Reduced quality of life

For Employer:

- Lost expertise & productivity
- Higher worker compensation costs
- Not great for morale
- Need to train replacement workers, or
- No budget for replacement workers- extra workload
  - Staffing gap hard to fill

Definitions

- **Slips…..**
  - Happen when something gets between your feet and whatever you are standing on
  - Loss of friction or traction
  - **Loss of balance**

Definitions

- **Trips….**
  - Happen when you make contact with something unexpected, and lose your balance
  - You step from one level to another and lose your balance
  - Results in uncontrolled movement

- **Falls….**
  - Two categories:
    1. Fall on same level
    2. Fall to lower level

Causes of slips, trips and falls can be placed into these categories…..

- Environmental
- Equipment or Tools
- Work Practices and Procedures
- Individual Factors

Environmental Spills

- **Wet**
  - Water, ice, slush
  - Mud
  - Grease, Oil
  - Food
  - Body fluids
- **Dry**
  - Dust
  - Debris
  - Construction
  - Plastic wraps, bags
  - Paper

Environmental Changes

Irregular walking surfaces

- **Changes** in elevation, slopes
- **Unmarked** steps or ramps
- **Missing, moving or uneven** floor tiles, ground cover
- **Rumpled** carpets
- **Curled** mat edges
- **Floor openings** that heels get stuck in

Name the Hazards?

- Uneven Elevator Landings
- Obstacles in Hallway Floor

Slips – Usually a combination of environmental factors and hazardous practices

- Polished or waxed floors can be slippery even when dry
- Smooth surfaces without 'tread'

- Texture changes
  - Carpet to vinyl or floor tile
  - Grid to smooth concrete
  - Metal to non-metal

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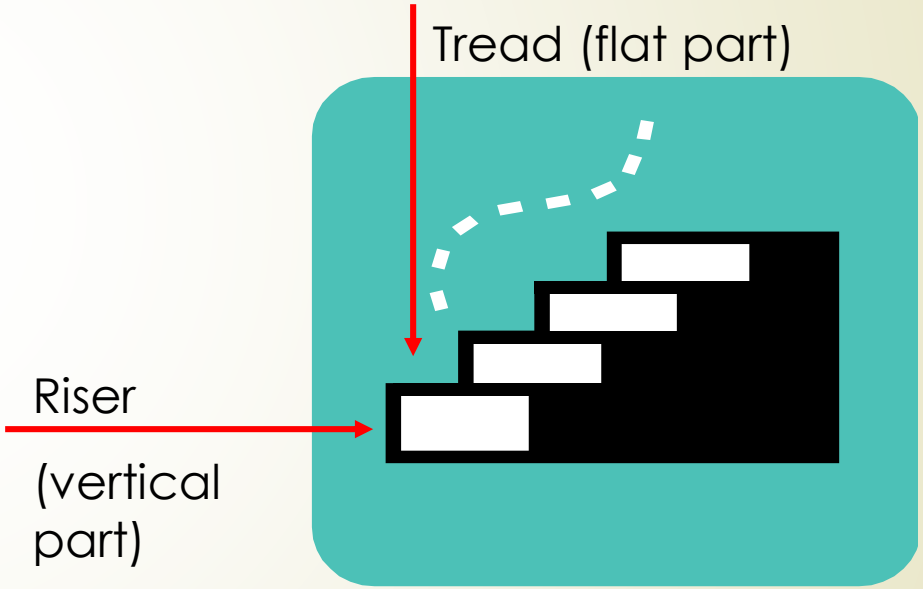
Causes of Trips? Much like Slips….

Things your feet catch onto:

- Inside:
  - Cords, purse straps, more
  - Clutter
  - Jutting furniture or boxes into aisle
  - Open drawers
- Outside:
  - Irregularities
  - Pebbles, gravel
  - Holes

Stair & Step Hazards

- Uneven steps
  - Taller or shorter step treads
  - Shallower tread depth
  - Uneven surfaces
  - Missing corners
- Obstacles
- Missing or damaged handrails
- Gaps



Stairway Hazards

Stairway Hazards

Stairway Hazards

Exits: Preventing Slips, Trips, Falls

Identify Hazards

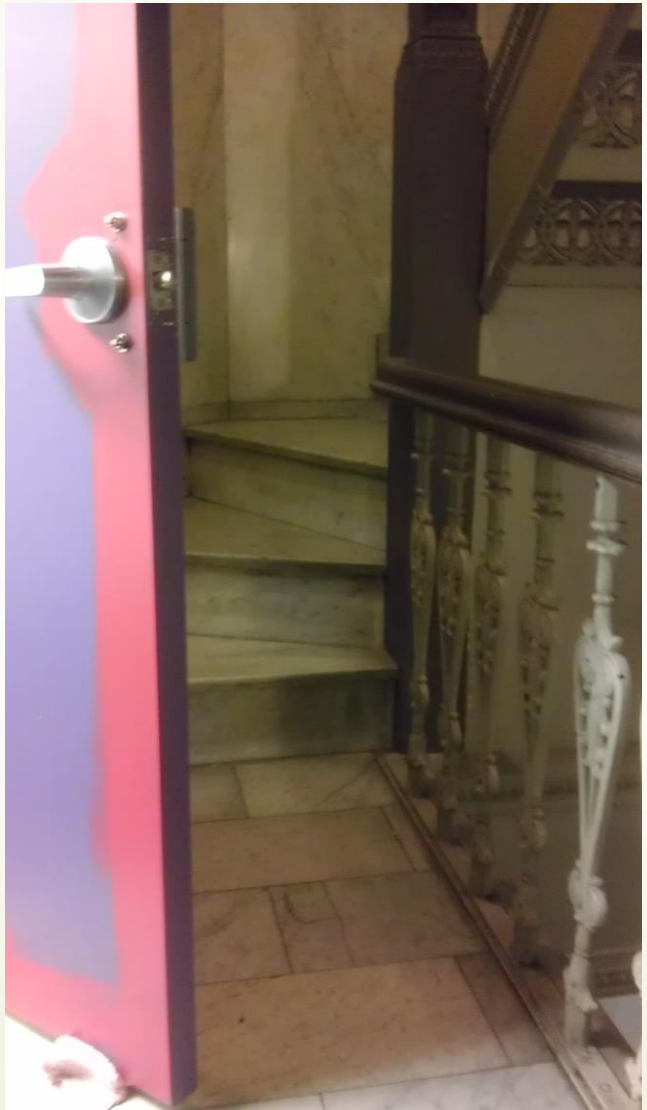
Let's say there was an evacuation alarm or drill. You might need to walk down 8 - 10 flights of stairs.

Do you know where the EXIT is?

Do you know where it goes to?

DO you know where the EXIT is in every building you enter?

Does anything block your exit?



Minimize hazards

- Are you in the right shoes for walking down flights of stairs?
- Do you have everything you need?

Exits:
Preventing Slips, Trips, Falls

Identify Hazards

- Check condition of exit pathway, lobby and street
- Make sure you can see your steps and the ground
- Stay near the wall and handrails for support
- Consider an **Exit Buddy**

Slip, Trip, Falls: Individual Risk Factors

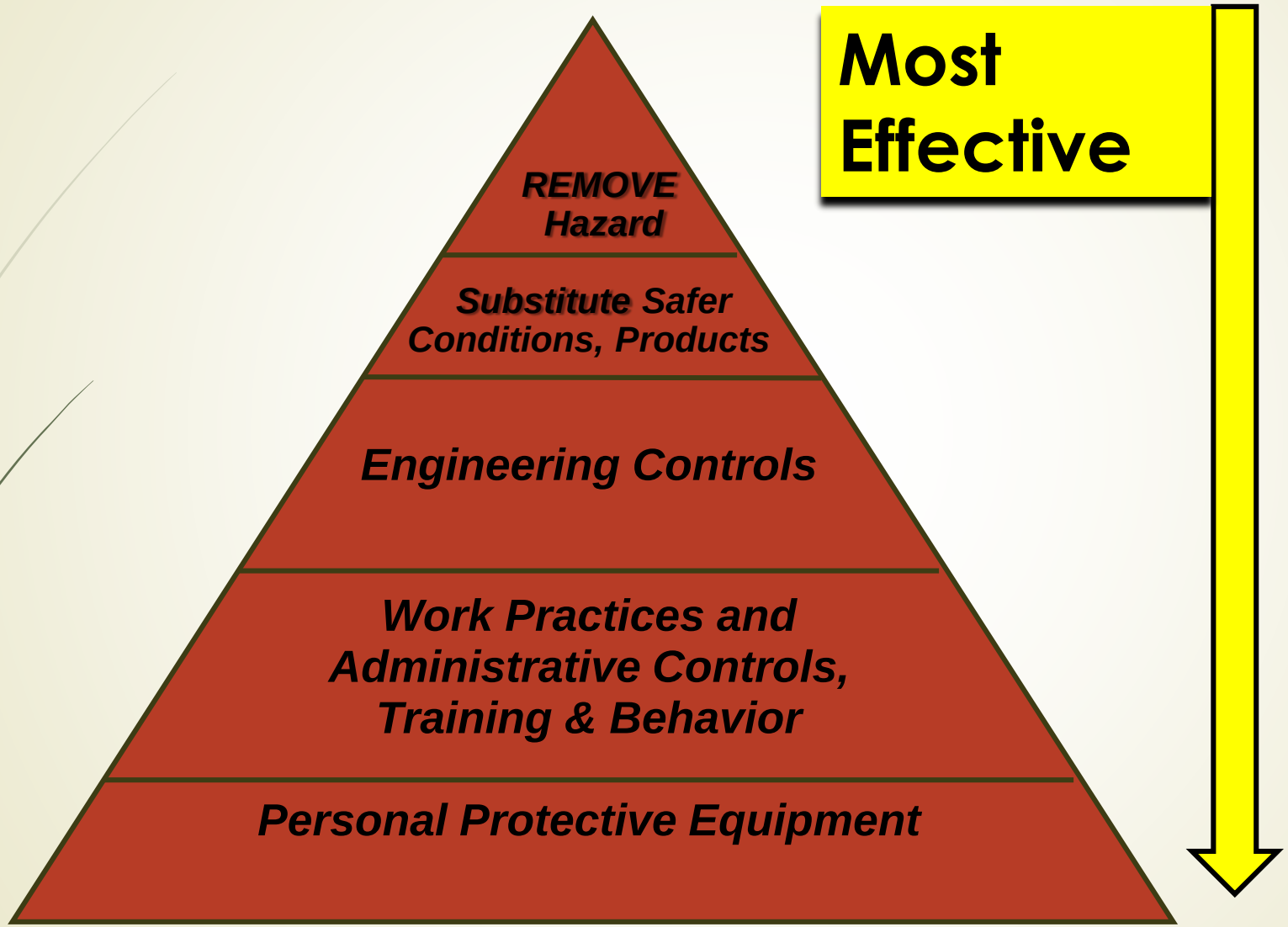
Personal Health

- Poor eyesight, new or old glasses
- Physical conditions
  - Injury or illness
- Medication side effects
- Heat, cold or stress
- Extreme tiredness, sleep deprivation

Behaviors

- Not checking/ clearing path before walking
- Moving large, bulky objects without help
- Walking while Distracted! ***Cellphones***
- Rushing
- Shoes!
  - Worn soles
  - Poor fit
  - High heels

Hierarchy of Hazard Controls



Most Effective

Least Effective but still necessary

Example of a Hierarchy of Controls for some slip-trip-fall hazards:

1. Remove the source of slippery conditions
2. Have devices in place that minimize slippery conditions as soon as they occur.
3. Train and warn employees about slippery conditions
4. Tell workers to pay attention to slippery conditions and to always use handrail
5. Tell workers to wear non-slip shoes

Preventing Slips/Trips/Falls What Can Do?

WE CAN:

- Identify, document and report workplace hazards
- Remove hazards within our control
- Work collaboratively with co-workers and management to remove hazards

CHECKLIST for Preventing Slips, Trips,& Falls: Inside the Building

- Lighting
  - Can you carry a small flashlight?

  C H E C K:
- Passageway
- Floor surface
- Cords and cables
- Drawers closed
- Boxes & clutter out of the way
- Spills cleaned
- Warning signs posted for slip trip fall hazards

CHECKLIST for Preventing Slips, Trips,& Falls: Outside the Building

Identify Hazards

- Weather
  - Windy?
  - Wet?
  - Freezing?
  - Messy?
- Something to grab on to if you lose your balance?
- Is it too crowded and you could be bumped into?

Preventing Slips, Trips, & Falls and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE is the least effective method of control but still VITAL and necessary

Footwear checklist:

- Non-slip sole?
- Tread with good grip?
- Comfortable & broken in?
- Weather suitable?
- Nothing on shoes that can catch in metal gratings or cracks

- How much walking will you have to do?
  - ***Can you wear one pair of weather appropriate shoes to travel with, and carry an extra pair for professional attire, if needed?***

What's in a Non-Slip Shoe?

Most Slip, Trip, Fall Injuries Are Preventable

- **HAZARD IDENTIFICATION**
  - Identify **risk factors** in walking pathways
  - Practice **good housekeeping**
  - If you can't get rid of trip hazards, **post warning signs** and tell people to watch out.
  - **Keep floors clear**
    - **Keep All Fire Exit Pathways Clear**
      - **Minimum 28 inches wide at all times (OSHA)**

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Name the Hazards…..

Name the Hazards

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Name the Hazards

OSHA & the Right to Participate in Safety Activities

What Does OSHA Coverage Mean?

- Right to a Safe Workplace
- Workplace Inspections with Employee Participation (Union or Representatives)
- Enforcement of Safety Regulations
- Hazard Information
- Access to Employer Records
  - HAZCOM, 300 logs, more
- Protection against retaliation
- **www.osha.gov**

OSHA Whistleblower Protections

- OSHA laws not only give workers the right to:
  - Participate in safety activities
  - Report injuries or illnesses
  - Report safety concerns
- OSHA also protects workers from retaliation when they take part in these activities on or off the worksite

Retaliation includes *'Adverse Actions'*

- Firing or laying off
- Reducing pay or hours
- Blacklisting
- Demoting
- Denying overtime or promotion
- Denial of benefits
- Disciplining
- Failure to hire or rehire
- Intimidation
- Making threats
- Reassignment affecting prospects for promotion

Retaliated against?
ONLY 30 DAYS to complain

- <u>OSHA LAW</u>

Under Section 11(c) of the OSH Act, employees are protected from retaliation whenever they report an injury or illness, file a safety complaint or participate in a safety inspection.

Employees cannot be disciplined for filing an injury or illness report.

- <u>PROTECTION FROM RETALIATION:</u>

TIMELINE

If employees experience retaliation they must file a complaint with OSHA within **30 days.**

- If employees win their 11(c) complaint case, they could be entitled to back pay and compensation for damages
- If employees lose their complaint case, they only have **15 days** to "appeal" the decision with OSHA.

(5) FIVE Ways to Communicate with OSHA

Occupational Safety and Health Administration

1. E-mail or Interactive ONLINE Forms
2. Phone OSHA
3. In-Person Visit
4. Fax a Complaint
5. Mail a Letter

OSHA Regional Office Contact Information:

OSHA Philadelphia Area Office
Wanamaker Building

100 Penn Square East, 12 Floor

Philadelphia, PA 19107

- (215) 597-4955 PHONE
- (215) 597-1956 FAX
- Toll-free number: 1-800-321-OSHA (6742)

OSHA WILL KEEP YOUR INFORMATION CONFIDENTIAL

OSHA Web Sites

Occupational Safety & Health Administration

www.osha.gov

- **How to file a complaint with OSHA:**

http://www.osha.gov/as/opa/worker/complain.html

- **Online Complaint form:**

http://www.osha.gov/pls/osha7/eComplaintForm.html

- **Download a form and mail or fax it to them:**

In English: http://www.osha.gov/oshforms/osha7.pdf

In Spanish: http://www.osha.gov/oshforms/OSHA7_SPANISH.pdf

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For More Information:

- **Healthcare Occupational Safety Center**
  Health Workers Working Healthy

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