

Slips, trips and falls on the same level can be serious workplace risks. In 2011, nearly 135,000 nonfatal fall-on-same-level incidents occurred in private industry, in addition to 111 all-industry fatalities, according to the 2014 edition of the National Safety Council's "Injury Facts."

To help prevent these incidents, it is important to understand each danger. The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety states that slips often result from wet or oily floors and loose rugs or mats. Common tripping hazards include clutter in walkways, poor lighting, open drawers and uneven surfaces.

To avoid slips, trips and falls, CCOHS recommends focusing on three main prevention methods:

1. Housekeeping:
 - Clean up spills as soon as they occur.
 - Mark spills with warning signs.
 - Mop or sweep up debris from floors.
 - Remove obstacles from walkways.
 - Secure mats and carpets with tape to ensure they remain flat.
 - Close cabinets or drawers when not in use.
 - Keep workplaces and walkways well-lit.
 - Replace burned-out light bulbs and faulty switches.
2. Flooring: Walking surfaces can be made safer by replacing unsafe floors, installing mats or adding abrasive strips.
3. Proper footwear: In workplaces with oily or wet floors, or where workers spend a lot of time outdoors, proper footwear is important to prevent slipping and tripping. Because of the multiple hazardous conditions that exist – as well as a large range of safety footwear – employers should consult with manufacturers to determine the best shoe for any particular job.

To reduce the risks of slips, trips and falls at work, CCOHS advises employers and workers to:

- Pay attention when walking, and do not rush.
- Walk with feet pointed slightly outward.
- Make wide turns at corners.
- Keep flooring in good condition.
- Have a flashlight handy in case you enter a room with little or no lighting.
- Ensure views are not obstructed.

Ref: National Safety Council – Safety and Health Magazine, April 2014