

A SAFETY MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Seeking to Prevent Slips, Trips and Falls

By Bob Lapidus, CSP, CSMS

Every one of us has tripped, slipped, and fallen. We cannot call ourselves humans if we have never done that. We tend to walk from A to B with our heads up toward our destination. The problem is that all kinds of hazards exist between where our eyes are looking and the ground on which we are walking.

Whether the hazard is a vehicle concrete stop block in a parking lot, or a cord across a walkway, or oil on the floor in a garage, if we are not looking down at the moment, we could find ourselves on the ground in a split second.

Seeking to prevent trip, slip, and fall accidents is a process. It is a little bit easier inside facilities because



we can find trip and slip hazards and remove them. We cannot eliminate the human element

where the involved person is not looking, but we can eliminate hazards.

Outside is another matter. Many employees work outside in bad weather and on terrain that is unsafe in every way.

In some cases, we can inspect the area where the work is to be done and eliminate the hazards we find. Nevertheless, employees have to be on the lookout for trip, slip, and fall hazards. That is easier said than actually done because oftentimes employees are performing a task requiring them to be looking up, not down. In many cases, the field work is unknown territory and hazards cannot be eliminated prior to the start of work.

Whether the work area is inside or outside, here are a couple of answers to help make employees more mindful of the hazards in their work environment:

1. Daily pre-work safety awareness meetings. Prior to employees starting their work day, an employee-who-supervises or a selected first-line employee reminds fellow employees of the possible dangers that exist in the area where they are working.
2. On-site reminders. Throughout the work shift, employees remind each other of possible hazards and watch out for each other. Small groups of employees, crews and teams, often take care of each other better than anyone else could possibly do. The small group is essentially a family comprised of employees who care for the safety of one another.

Every one of us forgets to do things we ought to do. When we see another employee make a mistake, we think s/he is careless. We forget that we do the same thing at times, when our minds are thinking about something other than our personal safety. Reminders to keep us more aware can be a big help in not only preventing trips, slips, and falls, but all accidents.

For More Information:

To become part of discussions on topics like the one above, go to www.safetycenter.org to obtain information about Safety Center's *Safety Management Specialist Certificate*.

After completing this nine-day program, graduates may take the exam to achieve the *Certified Safety Management Specialist* (CSMS) designation. Once this certification is achieved, successful candidates keep it for the rest of their lives without any additional requirements or fees.

Additional Questions:

Northern California Office at 916.438.3361
Southern California Office at 909.625.9650