

The Safety & Health Advisor

Spring 2018



Preventing Slip/Fall Injuries on Stairs

As spring approaches and we put another winter behind us, we can find some relief in moving on from the dangers of walking on icy exterior sidewalks and other same level walking surfaces. Much of our collective safety efforts are geared toward preventing slip/fall injuries on exterior surfaces during winter. But just because the snow and ice have left, we should not overlook hazards that are present year round. In particular, slip/fall hazards within facilities, specifically on stairs.

A slip, trip or fall at work can lead to injuries – and even death. In 2013, injuries from slips, trips and falls resulted in 229,190 cases involving days away from work, and 724 workers died, according to the 2016 edition of the National Safety Council chart book “Injury Facts.”

According to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), most general industry incidents involve slips, trips, and falls. They cause 15% of all accidental deaths, and are second only to motor vehicles as a cause of fatalities.

- 1 in 6 of all lost-time work related injuries results from slips, trips and falls.
- Slip, trip and fall injuries make up almost 20 percent of all job related injuries.
- It is estimated that these injuries result in an average of 11 days away from work.

Falls come in two categories: elevated falls and same level falls. 65% of fall-related injuries are a result of falls from same-level walking surfaces. While elevated falls are less common, these are often the most serious. Falls on stairs are really a combination of the two (Elevation and same level walking surfaces) and can result in significant injury and even death.

Contributing factors to slip/fall injuries on stairs include:

- Broken or missing handrails.
- Debris, trash, dirt or improperly stored materials on stairs.
- Stairs edges become so worn the edges become worn.

Highlights in this Issue

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- Stairs lack a non-slip surface, or have become slick.
- Stairs with inadequate illumination or poor contrast between treads and risers
- Stairways not adequately marked.

Reducing the risk of slipping on stairs, landings, and access areas is crucial. Let’s look at options employers can implement:

Stair Tread Surfaces:

- Provide slip-resistive tread covers on steps. Wider tread covers should be utilized to provide maximum slip resistance. If possible, yellow/bright colors are preferable, to offer improved step differentiation. Surfaces can be made metal, rubber, or adhesive strips.



Stairs Housekeeping & Maintenance:

Develop and implement specific guidelines on procedures required to clean/mop stairways. This should include specific guidelines, including:

Use of warning signs indicating wet floor conditions.

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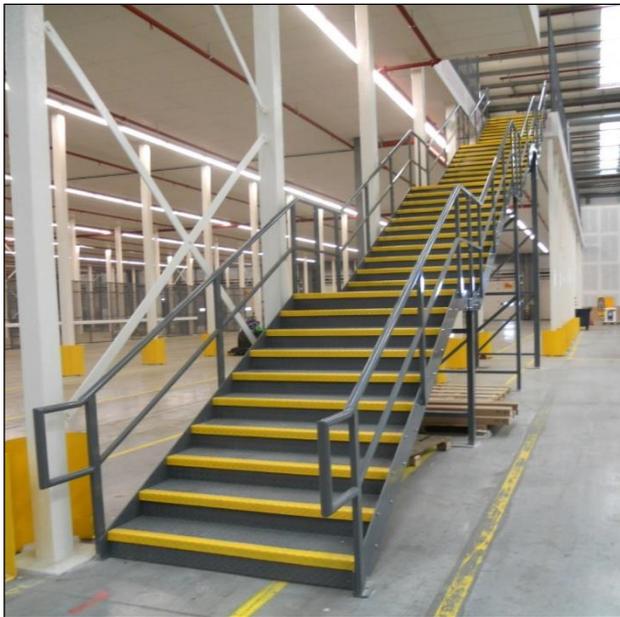
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Nothing should ever be stored on stairs/steps.

Spills or any debris should be immediately cleaned.

Handrails:

- Functionality must always take priority over aesthetics with stair handrails.
- Handrails must be visible, and in good repair. Employees are less likely to use handrails which are cracked, broken, or have splinters.
- Handrails should be a consistent shape and diameter through the entire length of the railing.
- Avoid carrying objects on stairs requiring both hands.
- Avoid carrying large objects which block vision.



Lighting:

Maximizing visibility on stairs is critical, and significantly reduces slip/fall exposure. Poorly lit stairs (particularly those lacking brightly colored tread surfaces) increase common mishaps including missing a step, catching a heel, or misjudging the number of steps. These can contribute to lower leg strains and sprains, and more serious fall injuries.

- Perform facility assessments to assure that all lighting is intact, and adequate. If needed, recommend that regular inspections are performed. Replace all broken lighting immediately.

- Recommended minimum lighting for stairs is 100-200 LUX, or 10-20 Footcandles. Contact your Safety and Health Consultant if you would like us to measure lighting levels using a light meter.
- Recessed step lights and strips integrated into risers can be effective, particularly within the hospitality industry where overhead lighting is typically dimmer.

Footwear:

Consider developing a slip-resistant footwear policy for employees. Many employees are aware of the hazards of slip/fall injuries, but most don't know the benefits that wearing quality slip-resistant shoes can provide. Wearing a good pair of slip-resistant shoes can reduce the chances of slip and fall accidents caused by spilled water, greasy or slippery tile floors in bathrooms, and production areas, in addition to stairs.

Slip/fall accidents, including those on stairs, may provide comic relief in the movies and TV, but they are no joke in the real world. Involve all stakeholders within your facilities for feedback on ways to improve safety and make all walking and working surfaces, including stairs, safe for everyone. These links provide useful information for employers:

http://www.nsc.org/NSCDocuments_Advocacy/Fact%20Sheets/Slips-Trips-and-Falls.pdf

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/hospital/hazards/slips/slips.html> (Health Care)

https://www.osha.gov/dte/grant_materials/fy06/46e0-ht10-06.html

Foundations for Safety Leadership

Practicing safety leadership skills has shown the potential to help construction firms improve their safety and health programs and reduce the consequences of workplace incidents. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of safety leadership skills training in the construction industry that could help employers reach their safety goals. To help address the gap, CPWR - **The Center for Construction Research and Training** developed [The Foundations for Safety Leadership \(FSL\)](#), a safety leadership training module designed to enhance foreman and lead workers' understanding of the importance of safety leadership and skills to put them into practice.

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The **2.5-hour Foundations for Safety Leadership (FSL) module** was formally released by OSHA as a 30-hour elective module in January 2017. Many employers have also incorporated the FSL into their on-going safety training efforts. The FSL training provides construction foremen and other lead workers with the skills and information they need to become effective safety leaders who are able create a strong jobsite safety climate. The interactive module teaches students about the costs of ineffective and the benefits of effective safety leadership and, most importantly, five (5) critical leadership skills and practices to use in their day-to-day interactions on the jobsite.

5 Skills and Actions of an Effective Safety LEADER	
Leadership Skills	Good Leadership Actions
Leads by Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes safety expectations as a core value Shares safety vision with team members Demonstrates a positive attitude about safety "Walks the Talk" Leads up!
Engages and Empowers Team Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages, encourages and empowers team members to identify and act upon unsafe situations by... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting hazards and safety concerns Providing solutions Reporting near misses Stopping work if necessary
Actively Listens and Practices 3-Way Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively listens to hear what team members are saying Practices 3-way communication by having person repeat the message they heard
Develops Team Members Through Teaching, Coaching and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respectfully teaches and coaches workers Watches the learner fix the hazardous situation or perform the task to make sure it's done correctly Focuses on potential consequences rather than on the team member Uses the FIST principle: Facts, Impact, Suggestions, Timely
Recognizes Team Members for a Job Well Done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Privately and/or publicly acknowledges team members for going above and beyond when it comes to safety

Thousands of construction workers across the country have already received the FSL training (including ones that work for an Atlantic Charter contractor) and are using the skills learned to more effectively carry-out company safety policies, procedures, and practices with their crew members and to create a strong positive jobsite safety climate. As one foreman who completed the module said: *"The biggest thing I took out of it – and it's something that I've always done but never took it as seriously as I do now – is that three-way communicating. Instead of just giving somebody some information, sending them off blindly to do the job and then getting mad "because they didn't do it right, they can explain to you exactly what you said to them. If they didn't get it the first time, you can talk about it, have an opportunity to get it right. And it also makes them feel like they're part of the planning."*

<https://www.cpwr.com/foundations-safety-leadership-fsl> is a link to the FSL site. Free training materials and additional FSL resources can be downloaded here including ones in Spanish coming soon.

Motor Vehicle Records Checks For Home Healthcare Agency Employees

For many home healthcare agencies, worker injury claims associated with motor vehicle accidents is a major loss source. Therefore, screening applicants' prior driving records as part of the hiring process, and annually thereafter is important. Agencies should verify the candidate has a valid driver's license during the screening process and review details of their recent driving record.

Spring 2018 Safety Conferences

The National Safety Council of Northern New England (NSCNNE) is holding its 47th Annual Safety & Health Conference on Tuesday and Wednesday April 10-11, 2018 at the newly remodeled Radisson Hotel in Nashua, NH. Registration is now open should you want any of your personnel to attend. There is a Keynote presentation and 24 breakout sessions on various safety and health topics for both general industry and construction as well as a vendor hall offering products and services. The registration fee depends on whether or not your organization is a NSC member and when you register. The conference brochure, provides the schedule, detailed session information, registration fees and enrollment process at the following link
<http://www.nscnne.org/nh-conference.html>

It's also time to mark your calendars for the 5th Annual OSHA Summer Summit to be held on Thursday, June 14, 2018 at the Campus Center of UMASS Amherst. Registration will open on March 5, 2018 and will once again be handled by the Safety Council of Western New England at www.scwne.org. In prior years, there was an extensive setup of safety related vendor booths and both general and breakout sessions on a number of relevant topics. This event has sold out for the past 3 years and that is expected to be the case again this year. It will be a day of quality safety and health training and networking!

In Massachusetts, a current motor vehicle record (MVR) report should be obtained for anyone who will be driving on company-related business.

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A report no later than 30 days old should be reviewed and can be obtained using the link below:

<https://secure.rmv.state.ma.us/DrvRecords/intro.aspx>

A MVR review check should be made at the time of hire and thereafter at least annually as a best practice. Every business should establish their own acceptable standards with guidance from their human resources department and their labor attorney. Sample selection guidelines are presented below to assist in evaluating the MVR report:

Within the last three years, the drivers MVR should not exceed the following general criteria (typically non-moving violations, such as parking tickets, are not part of the evaluation process):

- Any Major traffic violations – excessive speed (over 20 MPH over limit), reckless, negligent or careless driving, leaving the scene of an accident
- Three or more Minor violations such as speeding (under 20MPH under limit), failure to obey sign, failure to yield to the right of way
- Any suspensions (for any reason)

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) has a program in place for employers called the Driver Verification System (DVS). This system was put in place to assist in employers and help to facilitate immediate action to reduce the risk for accidents. Under the DVS program, registered employers receive an email notification whenever there is “change in status” for one of their registered drivers. Once the email is received from the RMV, the authorized employer contact must log into the DVS online system to view specific details of the status change (e.g., suspension, license expiration, etc.). Below is a link to website with additional details:

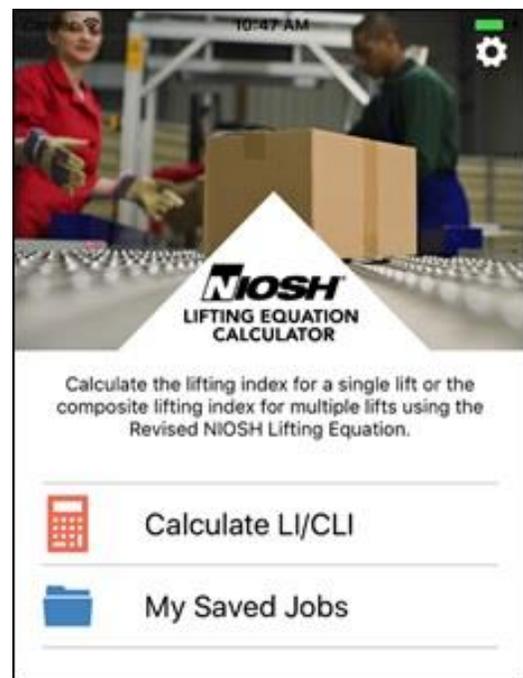
<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/driver-verification-system-dvs>

The DVS software currently is in the process of being upgraded and new users won’t be able sign up until after March 26th when the upgrade is complete. New users must complete a data authorization agreement as well to use the system. Further details are pending following the computer RMV software upgrades.

New App: NIOSH Lifting Calculator

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recently made their Revised Lifting Equation calculator available in mobile app form, named “NLE Calc” to further focus efforts on reducing musculoskeletal disorders due to manual material handling of objects in the workplace. It is available as a free download for either Apple (iTunes) or Android (Google Play) devices.

The app can be used to determine the risk index for both single and multiple (composite) lifting events for just about any industry where manual handling of objects (not persons) occurs.



The NLE Calc app may be downloaded through the following webpage or you can go directly to either the iTunes or Google Play stores.

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ergonomics/nlecalc.html>

The CDC NIOSH website also provides additional resource material associated with manual handling and injury prevention.

Acute strains are often unforeseen injuries that result in lost workday injury claims. Proper evaluation of work task requirements can be beneficial for injury prevention and its potential costs, as well as avoiding interruptions with productivity and/or adversely affecting product quality.

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ELD Mandate

The Electronic Logging Device (ELD) mandate is a comprehensive final rule published by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) on December 16, 2015 in the Federal Register. By December 18, 2017, the ELD mandate will require most commercial drivers to use ELD to record their hours of service (HOS). The e-log mandate sets who must use ELDs, the required technical standards of ELDs, [new supporting document requirements](#), and prohibition from driver harassment using the information from an ELD device.

The ELD mandate requires the use of a compliant electronic log, either an automatic onboard recording device, (AOBRD), or an ELD by all interstate drivers of commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) to record their [hours of service \(HOS\)](#) who are currently required to log and who are not otherwise [exempt](#) as of December 18, 2017. AOBRDs installed before December 18, 2017 can be used until December 16, 2019, by which time they must be upgraded to the ELD technical specifications.

The electronic logging rule applies to most motor carriers and drivers who are currently required to maintain records of duty status (RODS) per 49 CFR 395.8(a). The rule applies to commercial buses as well as trucks.

Even if a company is exempt, there are many good safety/loss control reasons to electronically log data. These include documenting [driver vehicle inspections](#) as well as tracking [driver qualifications](#) and vehicle maintenance.

For relevant information on how the ELD Rule impacts you and your organization, please see <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/hours-service/elds/electronic-logging-devices>. This site also provides an ELD final rule, brochure and checklist. See [49 CFR 395 Subpart B: Electronic Logging Devices](#) for specific requirements.

If you need assistance in evaluating your ergonomics or safety and health program, please contact Neal Freedman, John Cotnam, Mark Hickox or Rick Muller from Atlantic Charter's Safety and Health Department at (617) 488-6500.