

Fall Protection

Fall protection is required whenever a person is working four feet or more above a lower surface. Please be careful when walking on wet slippery surfaces and around tripping hazards.



FALL PREVENTION FOR OFFICE WORKERS

Avoiding Slips and Falls At The Office

It may come as a surprise that falls are the most common type of office injury. Yet almost all falls can be prevented by using common safety sense and learning how to recognize and correct typical fall hazards in the office environment.

Common Fall Hazards

One of the most common causes of office fall is tripping over an open desk or file drawer. Bending while seated in an unstable chair and tripping over electrical cords or wires are other common hazards. Office falls are frequently caused by using makeshift "ladders" (such as a chair, or a stack of boxes) and by slipping on wet floors (by the water cooler or coffee machine, for example). Loose carpeting, objects stored in halls or walkways, and inadequate lighting are other hazards that invite accidental falls. Fortunately, all of these fall hazards are preventable. The following checklist can help you stop a fall before it happens.

FALL PREVENTION CHECKLIST:

- Look before you walk - make sure your pathway is clear.
- Close drawers after every use. One of the most common causes of office falls is tripping over an open drawer.
- Avoid bending, twisting, and leaning backwards while seated.
- Secure electrical cords and wires away from walkways.
- Always use an appropriate stepladder for overhead reaching.
- Clean up spills immediately.
- If you see anything on the floor - a pen, a paper clip, etc. - pick it up.
- Report loose carpeting or damaged flooring to appropriate manager.
- Make sure walkways are well lighted.
- Walk, don't run!

Ladder Safety [BasicLadderSafety](#)

Use the 4-1 rule for ladder safety---set the base of the ladder 1 foot away from the wall for every 4 feet of ladder height.

Follow these guidelines when using ladders:

- Do not store anything on the ladder itself. Use a towline, a tool belt or an assistant to convey materials so that the climbers hands are free when climbing.
- Make sure hands and soles of footwear are free from mud, oil, grease or other slippery substances before climbing.
- Before using a ladder, inspect it to confirm it is in good working condition.
 - Ladders with loose or missing parts must be rejected. Rickety ladders that sway or lean to the side must be rejected.
- If you feel tired or dizzy, or are prone to losing your balance, stay off the ladder
- Make sure the surface that ladder is resting on is also free from slippery substances. Do not use a ladder outside in windy conditions.
- Make sure your ladder has a duty rating. Do not overload the ladder (weight should be measured as a total of the worker, tools, and equipment.)
- Only one person at a time is permitted on a ladder unless the ladder is specifically designed for more than one climber (such as a Trestle Ladder).
- Do not place ladders in front of closed doors that can open toward the ladder. The door must be locked, blocked open, or guarded.
- Never attempt to move a ladder while standing on it.
- Do not overreach or lean while working so that you do not fall off the ladder sideways or pull the ladder over sideways while standing on it.
- Utilize the "three point-of-contact" climb.
 - At all times during ascent, descent, and working, the climber must face the ladder and have two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand in contact with the ladder steps, rungs and/or side rails.
 - If 2 hands are needed to be free for a brief period for light work keep 2 feet on the same step and the body (knees or chest) supported by the ladder to maintain 3 points of contact.
- Do not use a ladder horizontally like a platform.
- The top of the ladder should extend 3 feet above the landing.
- The top 2 steps of a step ladder are not safe to stand on.
- Use a fiberglass ladder if there is any chance of contact with electricity.
- Secure ladder at top and base to prevent sliding.

- If you are working in a corrosive chemical environment, check with the ladder manufacturer to ensure your ladder is of the correct type.
- Read the safety information labels on the ladder.
- Do not sit on or straddle rungs of ladder.

For more information and/or suggestions contact the Environmental Safety Compliance Officer (ESCO) at Ext. 8441 or Email hpl-safety@hpl.umces.edu