

What services does EHS&EM provide for this Program?

- Monitors the overall effectiveness of the program
- Provides awareness training
- Conducts material inspections
- Assists with developing work practices

Who may I contact to find out more?

You may contact the Environmental, Health Safety & Emergency Management Office at (434) 395-2940, or on our website at <http://www.longwood.edu/safety/index.html>.



ENVIRONMENTAL
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Slips, Trips, and Falls



What are the hazards?

Slips and trips are the single most common cause of injuries at work! Surveying your work area for situations that most likely will result in an incident is the first step in avoiding them. Let's take a look at some of the definitions and situations that can result in injury:



A **slip** occurs whenever there is little friction or traction between your feet and the surface you are walking on. Some common causes of slips include:

- ◆ Spills left on the floor,
- ◆ Weather-related (snow, ice, rain)
- ◆ Improper footwear
- ◆ Wet/damp/slick floors (due to work situations)
- ◆ Slick floor finishes (marble, tile.)
- ◆ Sloping surfaces
- ◆ Loose gravel

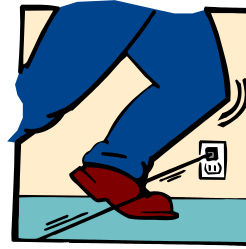
It is preferable that slip hazards (or any other hazard for that matter) be eliminated using engineering controls. Examples of engineering controls include slip-resistant floor finishes which increase or improve traction, providing handrails at steps and inclines, or prompt snow and ice removal on sidewalks and in parking lots.

Administrative controls reduce the exposure (but do not eliminate it) and include procedures for safe and prompt spill control and cleanup, good housekeeping practices, or the use of slip-resistant rugs and mats.

Often, engineering and administrative controls are infeasible or costly and cannot be implemented. At this point, personal protective equipment should be considered. Examples include slip-resistant footwear for wet or slippery locations, such as kitchen areas, or work boots with high-traction soles for muddy areas, such as construction/outdoor work.

A **trip** occurs when you stumble over an object, which can be temporarily or permanently present. Some common causes of trips are:

- ◆ Extension cords in walkways,
- ◆ Scrap materials, trash/debris on the floor,
- ◆ Tools and equipment on the floor,
- ◆ Electrical outlets (older models that protrude from the floor),
- ◆ Damaged flooring that sticks up or moves,
- ◆ Rugs or mats that curl up on the ends,
- ◆ Small changes in elevation, such as uneven sidewalks or door frames,
- ◆ Poor lighting or visibility in the area,
- ◆ Footwear—high heels, untied shoe strings, slick soles, loose or damaged footwear.



Engineering controls for trip hazards include maintaining proper lighting in the area at all times, removing obstacles whenever possible, making sure footwear is appropriate and in good condition, and repairing or replacing damaged flooring immediately.

Administrative controls for trip hazards include good housekeeping practices, marking uneven surfaces (if it can't be removed) with high visibility tape/paint to bring attention to the hazard, and utilizing proper storage areas/containers.

Slips and trips can result in a fall on the same walking surface level and may result in any number of injuries, including fractures, sprains, strains, contusions (bruises), concussions, cuts/abrasions/punctures, etc. These injuries are the result of:

- ◆ The impact or force that your body receives,
- ◆ How you land, or the part of the body that receives the brunt of the fall,
- ◆ What you land on—for example tools or uneven stairs,
- ◆ What you may strike on the way down, such as a handrail, or table top.

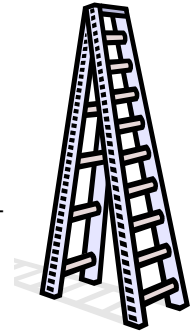
There actually is a "proper" way to fall, should you find yourself in such a predicament. This method attempts to control what part of the body receives the impact and helps to distribute the force.

- ◆ Tuck your chin in, turn your head to the side and throw an arm up.
- ◆ Twist or roll your body to the side.
- ◆ Keep your wrists, elbows, and knees bent.

Another type of **fall hazard** is when a person falls from an elevated position and lands on a lower level. Falls in this category can result in any of the injuries mentioned above, but can also include death. Common causes of falls from an elevation occur when:

- ◆ An elevated working surface (more than 4 feet above the adjacent floor or ground level at Longwood University) is not properly guarded,
- ◆ There is a hole in the walking, working surface that is greater than 12 inches or more in its least dimension (with more than a 4-foot fall),
- ◆ A person is working from a ladder (more than 4 feet off of the ground).

Engineering controls are highly recommended in fall hazard situations due to the potential for disabling injuries or even death! Examples include OSHA-approved guardrails and providing proper means of access (i.e. stairs or ramps) to elevations greater than 19 inches.



Administrative controls for fall hazards include following safe work practices for ladders. More information on ladder safety is available through Environmental, Health Safety & Emergency Management.

If guardrails are not feasible and safe work practices for ladders do not provide adequate protection, a personal fall arrest system may be necessary. Personal fall arrest systems consist of a full body harness, appropriate connecting device (ex. shock-absorbing ladder or fall limiter), and an approved anchor point. Additional training is required for personnel using such systems and is offered through Environmental, Health Safety & Emergency Management.