**Slips, Trips and Falls**

**How to keep your employees and visitors safe in your parish environment.**

Slips, trips and falls are some of the most common injuries (and claims) that the Office of Risk Management is notified of. Your facility should take safeguards against such hazards as clutter, protruding objects, and wet conditions.

There are three physical factors involved in slips, trips, and falls: friction, momentum, and gravity. Each one plays a role.

Friction is the resistance between objects, momentum is affected by the speed and mass of an object, and gravity is the force exerted on an object by the Earth.

**Slips:** Slips are a loss of balance caused by too little friction between your feet and the surface you walk or work on. Conditions to think about are wet surfaces, spills or weather conditions (snow and ice).

**Trips:** Trips occur whenever your foot hits an object, and you are moving with enough momentum to be thrown off balance. Conditions to think about are uneven surfaces, loose surfaces and objects in the way of travel.

**Falls:** Falls occur whenever you move too far off your center of balance. This can happen when any of the aforementioned conditions are present; if enough speed, force and mass are present. Typically, when you think of a fall condition most people think of falling from a height, such as when using a ladder.

When evaluating your location, the following should be kept in mind when assessing such a potential safety condition.

Since all three types of incidents may overlap in some way, the following is a compiled list of what to look for at your facility.

* Keep interior hallways and common areas free of clutter, boxes or supplies impeding the path of travel.
* Be sure to have sufficient lighting in stairwells and common areas.
* Any area containing steps, be sure stair treads (if present) are not loose and steps are in good condition.
* All handrails at your facility are in good condition and not loose.
* Promptly repair loose, pulled or worn carpet.
* Promptly repair any loose or broken floor tiles.
* Pay close attention to any loose or missing thresholds in transitional areas of flooring.
* Walk off mats and runners are in good condition, with no signs of lifting or missing edges.
* Exterior sidewalks should be check frequently for cracks, missing concrete, gaps or any unevenness.
* Clean up any spills immediately. Use wet floor signs.
* Extension cords should NEVER be used in a manner where the cord would cross a person’s path of travel.

**Tips to keep your maintenance workers safe from slip, trip and fall incidents.**

While working on slippery surfaces, be sure maintenance personnel are wearing appropriate footwear. Slip resistant shoe covers should be taken into consideration when performing floor maintenance (stripping and waxing).

Maintenance personnel should also consider using snow and ice traction cleats when performing snow removal operations.

**Ladder Safety**

As previously mentioned, most people think of a fall from a height, typically maintenance personnel are more susceptible to a fall from height due to the use of ladders, and the nature of the occupation.

**DO USE A LADDER OR STEP LADDER:**

* After you inspected it.
* In a safe environment free of clutter.
* Where you can maintain three points of contact (hands or feet)
* Stay near the middle of the ladder.
* If you follow the manufacturer instructions and ladder labels.

**DO NOT USE A LADDER OR STEP LADDER:**

* Extend ladders while standing on rungs.
* Overload capacity weight or carry loads on ladders.
* Allow more than one person at a time on the ladder.
* Stand ladders on uneven ground or movable objects.
* Using the top two steps on either a ladder or step ladder.