

SAFETY SENSE

MAY 2008

Editor's note: PASS ON EACH ISSUE OF THIS NEWSLETTER TO EVERYONE WITH SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES AT YOUR COMPANY.

Reduce the Risk of Slip and Trip Injuries

KEY POINTS:

- Slip and trip injuries can result in costly workers' compensation claims or claims by injured customers, vendors, or visitors.
- Maintaining your buildings, property, and job sites in a hazard-free condition is one of the best ways to reduce the risk of slip and trip injuries.
- Strictly prohibit running on the job, and prohibit jumping on and off equipment.
- Train your crew members in the dangers of wet, muddy terrain. Changing weather conditions can quickly result in the ground becoming very slippery.
- Good English/Spanish training materials are available to assist you. See the PLANET Safety Tips Sheet, "[Slip and Trip Injuries.](#)" Also see the January 2005 *Safety Solutions* insert, "[Preventing Slips and Trips.](#)"

Checklist for Employees on Reducing Slip and Trip Injuries

- ✓ Carefully check all job sites for slip and trip hazards before beginning work each day. Eliminate hazards where possible. Use safety cones or tape to mark holes and similar job site hazards that cannot be eliminated.
- ✓ Practice "good housekeeping" at all times. Keep your work area and job sites clear of debris. Put tools and equipment away at the end of the workday.
- ✓ Promptly clean up all spills. Make sure you have been authorized to clean up

chemical spills and that you are using the appropriate personal protective equipment. Use caution tape and warning signs to designate spill areas. Keep unauthorized people away.

- ✓ Wear sturdy shoes or boots with slip-resistant soles. These will give you improved traction on slippery surfaces.
- ✓ Walk; don't run, at all times. Be especially careful when the ground is wet.
- ✓ Don't jump on and off trucks and other equipment. Slipping and falling off a truck or large piece of equipment can result in death.
- ✓ Regularly check the steps on trucks and equipment for mud, water, and debris.
- ✓ Keep parking areas and building entrances clear of snow and ice during the winter months.
- ✓ Be careful when moving shrubs, trees, or other large items that could block your view. Make sure you can see what's directly in front of you so you don't trip and fall.
- ✓ Ensure that your lighting is adequate. Poor lighting can result in slips, trips, and falls.
- ✓ If you are using a ladder outdoors, try to set it up on even terrain. Take one step at a time, and do not stand on the top step. Also, do not carry tools or other items up and down ladders. This could result in losing your balance, then tripping and falling.

Effectively Working With Your Insurer

KEY POINTS:

- Your insurance agent and insurance company are excellent resources when it comes to safety. Yet, many times green industry employers aren't sure exactly how to ask for help.
- A good starting point is to make sure you are receiving monthly loss-run reports that clearly identify the source(s) of all injuries/incidents from the previous month.
- Ask your insurer to break out the costs so you can determine, for example, how much property damage incidents (such as truck crashes) are costing your company. Compare those costs to slip and trip injuries, back injuries, and other employee injuries resulting in workers' compensation claims.
- Make sure the reports you receive from your insurer are understandable. You will want to review these reports with managers, supervisors, and members of your company's safety committee to come up with ways to prevent recurrence in the future.
- Develop a good relationship with the loss control representative for your insurance company. Communicate with that person on a regular basis. Invite him or her to attend company safety committee meetings and to periodically speak to employees about safety.

Working With Your Insurer Dos and Don'ts

DO —

- Promptly report all injuries/incidents to your insurer.
- Use your insurance agent or insurance company to assist you in investigating claims.
- Check your insurer's Web site. This is often a good source of free, helpful information.

DON'T —

- Communicate with the wrong person at your insurance company. The person who sells you your policy may not be the same person from whom you need safety-related assistance.
- Neglect to track injury and claim trends. Take prompt action on any trends.
- Forget to ask your insurer for *all* of his or her safety recommendations.

Checklist on Effectively Working With Your Insurer

- ✓ Know what type of assistance to request. For example, find out if your insurer will make unannounced stops at job sites to check for any hazards. Ask if your insurer has a video-lending library, holds safety-related classes, or has other educational materials. See if your insurer has the resources to help you present oral safety training sessions in Spanish.
- ✓ Don't be afraid to tell your insurer about all employee injuries, even if they might not result in workers' compensation claims. Your insurance agent or insurance company can be of great assistance in preventing "questionable" claims from being filed.
- ✓ Consider your insurer your partner in promoting a safer working environment and reducing the risk of incidents that could result in costly injuries, citations, and penalties.

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