

Transportation Safety

Training ADVISOR

June 2023

Slips, trips, and falls

Help drivers avoid these common accidents

The basics of slips, trips, and falls

How to avoid injuries at work

Data shows drivers have high
rates of workplace injuries

Information and resources to help your drivers operate safely



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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Slipping and tripping and falling — oh my!

Slips, trips, and falls are, maybe surprisingly, one of the most common threats to driver safety. These accidents can result in a range of injuries from a simple bruise to a broken limb or traumatic head injury.

Many people realize that walking across a slippery surface covered in snow, ice, or water is risky.

Some, however, forget about the threat of injury associated with uneven walking surfaces. Loose floorboards, bunched up rugs and mats, cracked or buckled pavement, and small potholes can instantly throw a driver off balance and send them hurtling to the ground like Dorothy's house from the sky! The long-term effects of a serious fall may be more severe than expected, and you can't just wave a magic wand to make it all better.

Since uneven surfaces are often forgotten threats, it's important to remind your drivers to be aware of their surroundings. Drivers should make sure they always survey the path in front of them — whether it's a yellow brick road or not, the path should be smooth.

By practicing good balance, keeping a watchful eye out, and wearing appropriate footwear — no tin shoes! — drivers can put their best treaded foot forward to avoid slips, trips, and falls.

- Common uneven surfaces to look out for may include:
- Missing floor tiles and boards
- Sloped walking surfaces
- Bunched up floor mats
- Gravel walkways
- Damaged steps and ladders
- Transitions between floor types
- Electrical cables and cords on the ground
- Cluttered walkways
- Construction plates and other metal surfaces

Staying safe at work means getting home safely, and as we all know, there's no place like home! ♦





TRAINING BLUEPRINT — SLIPS, TRIPS, AND FALLS

No falling on the job

While many may think the biggest safety risk for drivers might be a crash or on-road accident, many injuries are actually the result of everyday activities.

Slips, trips, and falls can occur at many points throughout a driver's day, including when:

- Getting in and out of the cab,
- Checking the load,
- At the shipper and receiver, and
- Climbing up and dismounting the vehicle.

As well as being painful and potentially embarrassing, a slip, trip, or fall can be costly for both the driver and the motor carrier. Something as simple as missing a step or walking across a wet warehouse floor can cause an accident. These accidents can mean a loss in working hours and income for the driver and a loss in productivity and profit for the motor carrier.

TIP: Teach drivers that they are not immune from slips, trips, and falls. Remind them which common incidents can cause driver injuries.

The basics: Slips, trips, and falls

Slips occur when there is a loss of traction between your footwear and the walking surface. Help avoid slips by:

- Taking short steps and pointing your toes slightly outward when on slippery surfaces.
- Being extra cautious on smooth surfaces.
- Wearing appropriate footwear with good tread.
- Cleaning up or reporting spills right away.



Trips occur whenever your foot hits an object while you are moving with enough momentum to be thrown off balance. Help avoid trips by:

- Making sure you can see where you are walking. Don't carry loads you can't see over.
- Keeping walking and working areas well lit.
- Keeping the work area clean and tidy.
- Properly maintaining walking areas and alerting the appropriate authorities to address maintenance-related hazards.



Falls occur when you lose both your footing and your center of balance. Help avoid falls by:

- Never jumping off landings or loading docks.
- Repairing or replacing stairs and handrails that are loose or broken.
- Keeping passageways well-lit and clear of clutter.



TIP: Give drivers a short checklist of ways to avoid slips, trips, and falls to help them remember the best ways to stay safe.

Play it safe

Provide your drivers with the following tips to help reduce workplace injuries due to falls from the truck or trailer:

Don't rush, descend slowly. If a driver has been sitting for a long time, rushing could result in a strain.

Never jump from the cab or trailer. Descend carefully using the appropriate handles to get down safely.

Never climb down while holding anything. Place any handheld items in a safe place until standing on the ground.

Survey the ground below for potential obstacles before exiting the vehicle.

Exit the cab while facing the vehicle to keep a good grip on the handholds and to easily use the steps.

Never use a tire or a wheel hub as a foothold. Wear the right footwear for traction. ♦

TIP: Distribute and discuss any policies your company may have addressing this topic. End the training session with a question-and-answer discussion.





TRAINING HANDOUT — SLIPS, TRIPS, AND FALLS

Avoid injuries, slips, and trips

To avoid injuries when exiting the truck:

- Keep three limbs in contact with the vehicle at all times.
- Descend slowly, without rushing.
- Never jump from the cab or trailer.
- Avoid using a doorframe or door's edge for support, since it may not be stable.
- Never climb down with an item in hand.
- Survey the ground below for potential obstacles before exiting the vehicle.
- Exit the cab with your body facing the vehicle.
- Never use a tire or a wheel hub as a foothold.
- Wear the right footwear for traction.



To avoid injuries outside of the cab:

- Avoid distractions while walking.
- Watch for ice, oil, water, and other slippery surfaces.
- Take a moment to assess new spaces when you arrive.
- Look out for steps, drops, and other changes in surface elevation on the ground. ♦





TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE — SLIPS, TRIPS, AND FALLS

1. If you're in a hurry, it's okay to jump out of the cab or trailer.
 - A. True
 - B. False

2. When exiting the truck, how many limbs should you always keep in contact with the vehicle?
 - A. 1
 - B. 2
 - C. 3
 - D. 4

3. Wearing the right footwear can help you prevent trips, slips, and falls.
 - A. True
 - B. False

4. Which types of obstacles are most likely to be slippery and dangerous?
 - A. Ice
 - B. Oil
 - C. Water
 - D. All of the above

5. You should hold items in your left hand and hold the handle with your right hand when exiting the vehicle.
 - A. True
 - B. False

NAME: _____ DATE: _____



Data shows drivers have high rates of workplace injuries and illnesses

When a commercial driver is injured in the workplace, the DOT doesn't track details unless it involves a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) crash.

Instead, you must look to the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The agency studies the frequency of worker injuries and illnesses as the result of job activities. In 2020, the most recent data available, driver injury-and-illness rates were comparable to other vocations viewed as hazardous, such as construction.

Nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses

The nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses report from 2020 broke down incidents based on vehicle type operated.

BLS data provided the following on lost worktime for the year:

Vehicle type	Injury and illness cases	Incident rate (per 10,000 full-time equivalent workers)
Heavy and tractor-trailer trucks*	43,500	259.7
Light trucks**	21,610	248.9
*Weight rating of 26,001 pounds or more		
**Weight rating less than 26,001 pounds		

To understand whether these rates are significant, you must compare them against incident rates of other professions during the same year:

Construction — 207.1

Automotive service technicians and mechanics — 185.9

Maintenance and repair workers, general — 241.9

Electricians — 128.2

Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers — 289.8

Truck drivers have a higher incident rate than several other worker types, suggesting working in and around CMVs can be dangerous.

Heavy and tractor-trailer trucks

In 2020, the top injury for operators of heavy and tractor-trailer trucks was sprains, strains, and tears with the back and shoulder as the top body parts affected. The most common cause of driver injuries related to the vehicle in some way.

Specific to the actual event leading to an injury or illness, the top four were:

- Falling to a lower level,
- A roadway incident involving motorized vehicles,
- Falling on the same level, or
- A strike by an object or equipment.

Light trucks

In 2020, the top injury for those operating light trucks was sprains, strains, and tears with the back as the primary body part affected. Unlike operators of larger vehicles, the top three causes of injuries were too close to consider any one as predominant.



The three most common causes for the incidents include:

- Vehicle,
- Worker motion or position, and
- Containers.

Three of the four events leading to injuries and illnesses of light-truck drivers were common to the large trucks except for "falling to a lower level." The light-truck category, instead, added "overexertion in lifting or lowering" to its top four events.

Job hazard analysis

A job hazard analysis (JHA) can assist you by identifying and controlling hazards before they have the potential to cause harm.

The process focuses on job tasks and the steps that need to be taken to complete each. Ideally, after you identify uncontrolled hazards, you will take steps to eliminate or reduce them to an acceptable risk level.

Based on the BLS driver data, suggested training topics include:

- Proper lifting techniques

- Tips when working around parked and disabled vehicles:
 - Face oncoming traffic
 - Make sure others see you by:
 - Wearing high-visibility vests
 - Using warning devices
 - Turning on the vehicle's flashers
- Loading dock and yard safety, including
 - Use of spotters
 - Alert to activity (people, forklifts, vehicles)
- 3 points of contact when mounting/dismounting from a truck or trailer
- Slips, trips, and falls
- Load securement
- Ladder safety
- Use of harnesses
- Unloading freight (loose and falling cargo)
- Appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- A policy of requiring PPE can help reduce risks

Consider providing workers with:

- Work gloves
- Safety glasses
- Hard hat
- Appropriate shoes (e.g., steel-toed shoes, leather, tread)
- High-visibility vests

And, lastly, have employees report close calls.

Investigating near-misses may help determine why an event occurred so it can be corrected through policy, training, equipment, changes in process, and the like. ♦



Key to remember: BLS data illustrates that drivers experience several injuries and illnesses outside of CMV crashes. Employers can benefit from performing a JHA — and training employees based on its findings — to aid in preventing driver workplace injury or illness.



Next Month's Topic: HOS Limits/EDLs

The hours-of-service requirements, located in Part 395 of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, limit the number of hours a driver can operate a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) as well as the number of hours a driver can be on duty. ♦



Expert Help: Question of the Month

Question: Does the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) or the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) regulate the type of footwear that a CMV driver can wear?

Answer: While the FMCSA does not address the type of footwear a CMV driver must wear, OSHA's regulation, located in 1910.136, requires that affected employees use protective footwear when working in areas where there is danger from falling or rolling objects, or objects piercing the sole, and where electrical hazards exist. These conditions can be encountered when a driver is at customer locations or in a maintenance facility.

Even when driving, the footwear should be sturdy and have slip-resistant soles. Tennis shoes contaminated with fuel and oil on the soles create a slip hazard when entering and exiting the truck. Flip-flop style sandals can get tangled and may cause truck control issues. Slip and fall injuries are among the most frequent reasons drivers can miss work for extended periods of time, so a balance of comfort and safety is very important. ♦



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ISSN 2688-1616

GST R123-317687

(66932)



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