

Think Safety, Work Safely

“Have a nice trip; see you next fall.” The line usually gets a chuckle after someone loses his or her footing and harmlessly stumbles. But there’s nothing funny about slips, trips and falls that lead to injuries.

According to Safety Trainer, Gary Barancik, of Securitas Risk Management, “slips, trips and falls are the leading cause of accident and injury among security officers.” That’s not unusual: OSHA statistics show that slips, trips and falls are responsible for the majority of nonfatal occupational injuries nationwide. And more than half of those injuries result from falls on even or level surfaces.

Avoid Unplanned Trips

While falls are among the most common accidents, they are also among the most preventable. What’s the best way to prevent slip, trips and falls? First and foremost, watch where you are going.

Indoors, watch for clutter, cords and wires crossing the floor, and open file cabinet drawers. Stay alert for unexpected changes in the floor level, such as a step up, loose tiles or buckled carpeting. When walking outdoors, be aware of curbs, pot holes and standing water or ice.



If you must walk on a surface that is slippery or uneven, walk slowly and take short steps. Be careful when you come indoors from wet or snowy weather. Your boots or shoes are likely to be slippery, and there may be wet spots on the floors.

You need to see where you are going. Avoid carrying a load which will block your view. Use good lighting in walkways and stairways. Turn on the light before entering a room. Use a flashlight when walking or patrolling in areas with insufficient light.

Don’t run, unless there is an emergency. Use handrails when going up and down stairs, and do not attempt to take more than one step at a time.

Safety as a Priority

Of course, safety in the workplace goes beyond just preventing falls. Overall safety on the job is a concern of every employer and worker. And the most successful workplace safety programs “require a commitment from the entire company,” says Barancik. At Securitas, safety is a top priority. Gary holds monthly nationwide webinars to train and inform Securitas management on safety topics based on “trending analysis, seasonal issues, or topical subjects.” Gary also conducts special webinars at clients’ requests to “address a particular need or something specific that is happening at the client site.”

“At Securitas, safety training is proactive, not reactive. We take training seriously,” says Gary. Branch managers hold monthly safety meetings at the local level. “They have access to Safety Smart, an online service that provides materials, like training aids, handouts and PowerPoint presentations. It gives each office the flexibility to choose its own monthly topic and keeps training relevant to each site. Or, I can do loss-runs analyses and suggest a safety meeting topic for one or more branches. And the materials are all there, ready to use, consistently, at every branch nationwide.”

And what are the results of these safety efforts? Compliance with OSHA requirements that are above and beyond the norm. “We’re at 97 percent compliance — that’s unheard of in this, or any industry,” says Barancik.

So what is Gary’s bottom-line advice for staying safe at work? “Pay attention,” he says.

“Every officer — every person — can do it. It doesn’t really require any special training, just consistent reminders.”

An Attitude of Safety

Maintaining an attitude of safety is a critical part of staying safe on the job. Here are six fundamental elements of a good safety attitude that can direct safer work habits.

- **Awareness:** Pay attention. Stay alert to the possible hazards in your work environment so that you can take steps to correct or guard against them.
- **Focus:** Concentrate on the task(s) at hand. Distractions, boredom or fatigue can lead to accidents and other safety hazards.
- **Strength:** Have the strength to do the right thing even when it’s easier not to. Follow safety procedures and post orders completely, every time.
- **Patience:** Take the time to do things correctly every time — like always buckling your seatbelt, even on quick trips. There are no shortcuts to safety.
- **Responsibility:** Take responsibility for a safe work environment to benefit yourself and others.
- **Thought:** Stop to think before you act. Accidents are not always the result of bad luck. They occur when someone decides — consciously or not — to take a chance. Be smart and avoid taking unnecessary risks.

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