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*Aaron assists with a variety of safety related issues and regulations including workplace safety, drug and alcohol regulations, driving, and OSHA compliance.*

## Safety Question of the Month

July 2020

**Q:** How can we prevent slips, trips and falls?

**A:** A third of workplace fatalities are attributed to falls in the construction industry, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics for 2018. OSHA has even named falls one of its ["Fatal Four."](#) These injuries account for 15% of all reported claims.

Falling from the same and lower levels are the most common types of falls. If an employee falls, they may incur an impact injury. Employees may fall directly on pavement, flooring, stairs or objects underneath them. Resulting injuries can vary from contusions to impalements, and even death.

Slips and trips may also have soft tissue injuries such as sprains or pulled muscles. Soft tissue injuries tend to have prolonged recoveries, and an employee may need weeks of physical therapy, quickly racking up medical bills. Injuries average \$40,000 per incident and 11 days of missed work.

Employers and staff can work together to avoid these injuries by practicing the following:

- Make sure workspaces are clear of trip hazards in work areas
- Clean up spills immediately
- Watch for ice and snow and removing the hazard (salt/sand as needed & shoveling)
- Watch for holes (openings larger than 2 inches must be covered per OSHA)
- Secure loose boards
- Ensure raised nails/screws are flush
- Correct uneven walking surfaces
- Proper ladder use

Additionally, openings and leading edges can be protected by administrative controls, fall restraint, fall arrest and fall prevention equipment.

Most slips, trips and falls can be eliminated with proper prevention. Identify hazards and tasks that create the opportunity for employees to become injured, then educate employees through posters, training, and toolbox talks. Help employees identify hazards by showing examples and images. And always provide the appropriate equipment to help your employees be safe while completing their work.

You can also check out this [infographic by Graphic Products](#) highlighting the effects of slips, trips and falls.

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