

# Walking and Working Surfaces

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Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management Department

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## **I. PURPOSE**

The procedures described in this safety manual are intended to reduce the risk of slipping, tripping, and falling on the campus of Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA). Falls and potential injuries can be minimized or prevented by ensuring the SFA campus remains free of slip and trip hazards. The information contained in this manual has been developed in accordance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act, 29 CFR Subpart D (1910.21, 1910.22, & 1910.25).

## **II. RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **A. Environmental Health, Safety, & Risk Management (EHSRM)**

1. Review and update the Walking and Working Surfaces safety manual every three years or when new information is made available;
2. Investigate the cause of slip, trip, and fall accidents;
3. Look for potential trip hazards and other unsafe conditions on campus that could lead to a fall;
4. Inspect walking and work surfaces where accidents have occurred or in response to reports of unsafe conditions;
5. Submit work orders to the appropriate maintenance department to correct slip, trip, and fall hazards and unsafe conditions on campus;
6. Follow up on problem areas to ensure satisfactory corrections have been completed; and
7. Stop work that creates a slip, trip, or fall hazard until acceptable corrections have been made eliminating the hazard.

### **B. Grounds & Facilities Maintenance Personnel**

1. Supervisors should train grounds and facilities maintenance staff in properly recognizing slip, trip, and fall hazards and conducting work in a safe manner to avoid creating a slip, trip, or fall hazard for themselves or others;
2. Regularly inspect walking and working surfaces, make repairs, and maintain these surfaces in a safe condition when deficiencies are identified;
3. Promptly respond to work orders and other reports of hazards on campus that could pose a slip, trip, or fall hazard;
4. When any correction or repair involves the structural integrity of the walking-working surface, ensure that a qualified person performs or supervises the work.
5. Restrict access to work areas where these hazards are present until the work is completed or the hazard has been eliminated; and
6. Promptly report to a supervisor or EHSRM when additional resources are needed to correct problems and eliminate hazards on campus.

## **III. SLIP, TRIP, & FALL PRECAUTIONS**

### **A. Housekeeping and Facility Maintenance**

All employees are responsible for maintaining their work area in a clean and orderly fashion. Excessive clutter may pose safety risks to you and others in your area. Floors are to be kept clean and, to the extent feasible, in dry condition. The general housekeeping guidelines below should be observed to help minimize slip and trip hazards.

1. Surfaces of floors in the work place, passageways, storerooms and service rooms shall be kept in good repair and free from hazards such as sharp or protruding objects, loose boards, corrosion, leaks, spills, snow, and ice. If you notice a problem that may pose safety risk, contact your supervisor or the Physical Plant department right away to have it repaired.
2. Aisles and passageways shall be kept clear. There shall be no obstruction across or in aisles that could create a trip hazard. Permanent aisles and passageways shall be appropriately marked. When mechanical handling equipment, such as a forklift, is used, sufficient safe clearances shall be allowed for aisles at loading docks, through doorways, and wherever turns or passage must be made.
3. Electrical extension cords are permitted for temporary use only and must be picked up when the work is completed or at the end of the shift. Every effort should be made to prevent extension cords and other temporary wiring from crossing walkways. When temporary cords do cross walkways, they must be secured flat against the ground with gaffer's tape or duct tape when possible; or covered using cable protectors, mats, or cable ramps when taping is not practical.
4. Sidewalks shall be maintained in good repair, free of defects and obstructions that could cause injury from tripping or falling.
5. Wet floor signs shall be placed in common areas where floors are left wet from mopping or spills when the floor cannot be immediately dried.
6. Stripping wax from hard floors makes the surface extremely slippery. Use extreme caution and avoid walking on stripped floors until completely dry. Special shoe covers or old pantyhose may be placed over shoes to help minimize the risk of slipping and falling while stripping floors. When stripping the floor of a room, always work from the corner farthest from the exit and work your way back toward the door. When stripping the floor of a hallway, always strip one side first, allow to dry, then complete the other side. These methods will allow you to work without the need to walk on a wet slippery surface. Never allow others access to freshly stripped floors until completely dry.

#### **B. Special Purpose Flooring and Surfaces:**

1. Mats, gratings, false floors (duckboards), or other non-slip materials shall be used in refrigerated compartments, wet process areas, and other locations where drainage is necessary.
2. Kitchen area floors subject to wet conditions adjacent to mechanical kitchen equipment should be provided with extra non-slip protection such as abrasive material or anti-slip surfacing.

#### **C. Floor Opening and Floor Hole Protection:**

1. Floor openings and floor holes 2 inches in diameter or greater, such as ladder ways, hatchways, floor chutes, and manholes that a person can accidentally walk into, shall be guarded by either a standard railing with toe board on all exposed sides or a solid floor hole cover.
2. When a cover is not in place, it shall be attended or protected by a removable standard railing.

#### **D. Open Sided Work Surfaces:**

1. Open sided floors, platforms, and runways four feet or more above floor or ground level shall be guarded by a standard railing on all open sides with toe board to prevent falls of materials. Exceptions to this are only allowed at loading docks or other similar elevated work surfaces where a railing would hinder a person's ability to perform necessary job functions. The edges of these elevated surfaces must be marked with bright yellow paint or yellow and black hashed paint.
2. Special hazards created by open sided floors in close proximity to dangerous equipment, tanks or pits containing dangerous chemicals shall be guarded with a standard railing and toe board, regardless of height.
3. Elevated work surfaces must be able to support the maximum intended load for that surface.
4. Safe means of access and egress must be available and used by employees to access walking-working surfaces such as elevated platforms.

***\*Note: Safe work procedures involving ladders and other elevated work surfaces including appropriate fall protection are addressed in the SFA Ladder, Scaffolding, and Fall Protection Safety Program available at:***

***[http://www.sfasu.edu/safety/documents/Ladder\\_Scaffolding\\_and\\_Fall\\_Protection\\_Safety\\_Program.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/safety/documents/Ladder_Scaffolding_and_Fall_Protection_Safety_Program.pdf)***

#### **E. Stairs and Elevation Changes**

1. Fixed stairs shall be provided for access from one structure level to another where operations require regular travel between levels, and for access to operating platforms at any equipment which requires routine access and transport of tools.
3. Fixed stairways shall be designed and constructed to carry a load of five times the normal live load anticipated but never of less strength than to carry safely a moving concentrated load of 1,000 pounds.
4. Fixed stairways shall have a slip resistant tread and meet the size and safety requirements in 29 CFR 1910.25.