

## Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

## Road freight transport industry – Slips, trips and falls

Slips, trips and falls are common causes of injury in all industries. In road freight transport workplaces, such incidents can result in serious injury. For example, a slip, trip or fall might occur:

- near a moving vehicle resulting in a crushing injury
- on a hard floor or stairs resulting in a fracture or sprain
- while carrying a heavy load resulting in a back injury.

### Slips

Slips are the result of insufficient friction between a person's feet (or footwear) and the surface on which they are walking. This is often the result of one or more of the following:

- a floor surface that does not provide enough grip
- shoes that do not provide enough grip
- a contaminant on the floor (e.g. water, oil, dust) which reduces the friction between the shoe and floor
- a slope in the floor surface which increases the friction needed to maintain traction.

### To minimise the likelihood of a slip:

- install slip resistant flooring surfaces
- increase the slip resistance of flooring on ramps and slopes
- apply treatments such as sand-blasting, coatings or acid-etching to existing floor surfaces
- avoid spills and contaminants on floors by stopping leaks from machinery and pipes

and ensuring waste material (e.g. dust, rubbish) is cleaned up

- have absorbent mats or floor materials at entrances to stop water being tracked inside on rainy days
- have adequate procedures in place to clean up spills, leaks and waste
- perform wet cleaning outside work hours, or dry surfaces before pedestrian traffic is allowed in the cleaned area
- provide workers with appropriate footwear.

### Trips

Trips are often the result of low obstacles in a pedestrian's path caused by uneven or cluttered surfaces and the pedestrian's inability or failure to see or notice the obstacle. Trip hazards in the transport and storage industry are often caused by:

- materials being left on the floor in walkways or work areas
- cables and cords laying on the floor in walkways or work areas
- damaged or uneven floors
- poorly designed or damaged stairs (e.g. inconsistent rise/going dimensions).

**The risk of a trip can also be increased when trip hazards are harder to see.**

### This can happen when:

- workers are required to carry or move items which restrict their view
- lighting is inadequate
- steps or changes in floor height are not clearly marked.

**Some possible solutions for minimising the likelihood of a trip include:**

- provide adequate storage systems to keep materials out of walkways and work areas
  - clearly mark walkways and ensure materials are not stored in these areas
  - support cords and hoses overhead to keep them off the floor
  - make sure damaged floors and walkways are repaired immediately
- minimise changes in floor level. If levels must change, ramps are preferable to steps
  - where sudden changes in floor level occur make sure there is good lighting and visual cues (e.g. painting edge of steps, post signs indicating step).

For more information on slips, trips and falls and other workplace health and safety issues visit [www.worksafe.qld.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au)

© The State of Queensland (Department of Justice and Attorney-General) 2010

Copyright protects this document. The State of Queensland has no objection to this material being reproduced, but asserts its right to be recognised as author of the original material and the right to have the material unaltered.

The material presented in this publication is distributed by the Queensland Government as an information source only. The State of Queensland makes no statements, representations, or warranties about the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in this publication, and the reader should not rely on it. The Queensland Government disclaims all responsibility and all liability (including, without limitation, liability in negligence) for all expenses, losses, damages and costs you might incur as a result of the information being inaccurate or incomplete in any way, and for any reason