

Protecting Workers from Slips, Trips and Falls during Disaster Response

Responding to natural and man-made disasters puts emergency response workers at risk of injury or death from slips, trips and falls.

Steps employers must take to keep workers safe:

- Conduct pre-incident disaster response planning and ensure that emergency workers know the plan.
- Assess the workplace to determine if hazards are present or are likely to be present.
- Provide protective equipment to prevent slips, trips and falls including:
 - Slip-resistant **footwear** (e.g., rubber soles).
 - **Gloves** so workers can grip railings/ladders safely to steady themselves.
 - **Head protection**
 - **Personal fall protection**
- Train workers to identify hazards, including those that require protective equipment, and how to prevent injury.

Ways to Prevent Slips, Trips and Falls

Where possible, avoid walking on wet/slippery surfaces; wipe off the bottom of wet footwear.

- Use flashlights or helmet lights to stay clear of holes or floor openings, wet or slippery surfaces, and debris or equipment.
- Do not step on any surface until you have visually inspected it to ensure there are no holes or weak spots and that it can support workers and their equipment.
- Never carry equipment or loads in your hands when climbing ladders.
- Wear backpacks and tool belts to hold equipment and keep both hands free.
- Use fall protection when walking or performing emergency response activities near unprotected edges of elevated surfaces.
- Use communication devices, particularly hands-free devices, for contacting employers/incident commanders and other workers about slip, trip and fall hazards.

Remember

- When in doubt about the safety of an activity, stop and notify a supervisor.

For more information:



U.S. Department of Labor



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