

## Tripping Hazards ... They're Everywhere



*Did you know that nearly 50 percent of jobsite accidents result in strains and sprains?*

*Falling and tripping hazards can cause not only strains and sprains, but also breaks and tears to your body parts. Always watch where you're going.*

**On every jobsite** there are hundreds of possible tripping hazards: stray pieces of wire rope coiled on the ground, scrap lumber in aisles, bailing wire on the loading ramp, surveyor stakes, uneven toolshed steps, steep ramps, loose cleats on ramps, and more. Tripping hazards are like alligators in the swamp--there are thousands of them.

**Let's say one morning** the foreman asks you to go to the toolshed and bring three shovels and a sack of concrete to the trench site. You climb up into the shed (because there are no steps) and grab the shovels and the concrete. While jumping from the shed, you twist your ankle and knee. Now you can hardly walk. Now you're part of that 50 percent statistic. You have a full-blown jobsite injury because you were careless.

**Sure, you can blame** the jobsite superintendent for not providing stairs to the storage trailer. But no one pushed you from the trailer. You didn't look before you leaped, and you suffered a painful injury.

**What about a 6 foot excavation** left unattended while the crew goes to another part of the jobsite? The crew won't be going back to this excavation until tomorrow, and they didn't put a guardrail around it or provide any other warning. What happens if a worker falls into this unguarded hole? Probably another twisted ankle or possibly a broken leg or back.

**How many extension cords** have you stumbled over in the last week? What about pieces of metal strapping that held a rack of pipe but was left on the ground after the pipe was loaded onto a flatbed? Or a plastic sandwich bag lying on the floor of your excavator's cab? All these innocent pieces of trash are just waiting for you to walk by. When you get too close, they reach out and bite you.

### **Tips from the Top:**

- Clean grease off ladder rungs.
- Provide ample lighting in stairwell areas.
- Keep extension cords out of aisleways.
- Keep extension cords out of stairwells (landing).
- Bend upright rebar at a 90° angle.
- Keep snow and ice off steps leading into trailers.
- Provide adequate stairs into storage trailers.
- BE ALERT AT ALL TIMES!!!

### **And Some More Tips:**

- Each year, too many construction workers are injured by slips and falls. Slipping on the

- floor is bad enough, but falling from a height can be disastrous.
- How can falls be prevented? Keep your eyes open!
  - When working at heights, proper guardrails must be used.
  - Scaffolding must rest on firm footing and should have all the bracing installed.
  - When using multi-level staging, the scaffolding must always be anchored to the structure.
  - First quality cleated planks, completely covering the working area, are a necessity.
  - Orderliness plays a big part in preventing slips and falls.
  - Debris lying around on floors and working areas is an open invitation to accidents.
  - Weather increases hazards particularly in winter when snow obscures debris from view.
  - Wet weather causes muddy feet, which contributes in turn to slips and falls.
  - Wipe your feet before climbing steps or entering a work area.
  - Your eyes are your best defense against slips and falls.
  - Watch your step and look where you're going.

*A FALL "AFTERMATH" : It takes about two weeks to heal a broken ankle. Four to six weeks for a broken leg. Three to four months for a broken hip. A lifetime for a broken back. PLEASE BE CAREFUL!*