



MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

THINKING SAFE AND GREEN



**AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY**

#17

SLIPS, TRIPS, AND FALLS

Information given here is intended for use by program representatives, master gardeners, and those they train.



According to information available from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), slips, trips, and falls cause 15 percent of all accidental fatalities and are a major cause of accidents resulting in injuries. By taking several simple precautions and being aware of their area(s) where activities are taking place, Master Gardeners and Program Coordinators can control and/or reduce exposure to slip, trip, and fall conditions that may cause injuries.

Common Causes of Slips, Trips, and Falls

- Slippery walking surfaces due to the presence of water, oil, animal waste, loose carpet, broken tile, loose gravel, or other slick materials and liquids.
- Uneven walking surfaces in outdoor areas such as fields or broken sidewalk pavement.
- Obstructed offices, activity areas, hallways, aisles, or outdoor pathways due to obstacles such as extension cords, tools, chairs, open file drawers, brush, and tree limbs/roots.
- Improper ladder use, standing on furniture, and unsafe traverses of steps and stairs.
- Jumping off equipment, from one level to another, or across ditches.

Slip, Trip, and Fall Precautions

- Always promptly clean up spills and place warning signs for wet or slippery walking surfaces.
- Walk at speeds that the surface conditions permit.
- When possible, detour around wet or slippery walking surfaces.
- Practice good housekeeping by keeping activity areas, hallways, aisles, and outdoor pathways free of obstacles and clutter. Always close file drawers after use.
- Never stand on furniture to reach for elevated objects. Always use a ladder or step stool.
- Take appropriate precautions when loose or damaged carpeting, floor tile, and sidewalk pavement are present.
- Cover extension cords when they temporarily cross walkways.
- When dismounting equipment, use manufacturer-installed handrails and ladder rungs.
- Never jump across ditches or from one level to another (i.e., from a loading dock to the ground).
- Wear appropriate slip-resistant footwear for the type of task to be performed.
- Be alert of your surrounding when climbing or descending steps or stairs. Use handrails where present.
- Always provide adequate lighting in activity areas, including all walkways.
- Reduce your walking speed when turning or moving around obstacles.

A companion safety video about Slips, Trips, and Falls is available for loan from the ANR Environmental Health & Safety Library at <http://safety.ucanr.org>.