

Safety Bulletin

Issue # 08-2025

ENERGY
SAFETY
CANADA

Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls in Cold Weather

Slips, trips and falls are among the top five incident types for companies, big or small. These incidents are more common in the fall and winter—even for companies with established safety management systems.

As temperatures drop and conditions change, the risk of slips, trips and falls increases significantly. Wet leaves, frost, ice and snow can create outdoor and indoor hazards. Staying aware and taking precautions helps keep everyone safe.

Impacts of Slips, Trips and Falls

Alberta and Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Boards claims data highlights the following impacts of slips, trips and falls:

- General labourers in oil and gas drilling are the most impacted workers and account for 17% of claims. Transport truck drivers are second, with 14% of claims.
- Most slips—depending on how “slip” is defined—are categorized as falls on same level:
 - 20% of slips, trips and falls involve loss of balance without falling.
 - 60% involve a fall to floors, walkways and ground surfaces.
- The remaining involve falls, striking vehicles, equipment, containers, etc.
- Among slips, trips and falls where a secondary source (what initiated the fall) was identified:
 - 35% were caused by the injured worker's own body motion.
 - 29% were due to environmental conditions, almost always ice or snow.
 - 6% were on floor, walkway or ground surfaces.
 - The rest involved various objects the worker tripped over or fell off.
- Many injuries occur without impact, e.g., tweaking your back while trying to recover from a slip. Body motion (without a fall) accounts for 20% of slips, trips and falls injury claims.
- Psychosocial issues are quite remote to slips, trips and falls, as indicated by injury claims. However, PTSD and anxiety disorders are noted in a small number of related claims.

Recommendations for Employers

- Ensure that all sites have a plan that includes a review of past incidents and problem areas, ensuring salt and sand are available on site and PPE is available and allocated.
- Assess surface conditions regularly and ensure walkways, platforms and truck loading areas are well-lit before work begins.
- Track and analyze near-misses (like slips without falls) to understand how work is really done and where systems can be strengthened. Promote open, blame-free reporting.
- Provide slip-resistant footwear suited to varying terrain, recognizing that conditions change and workers need adaptable protection.
- Focus training on balance, posture and hazard recognition in dynamic environments—especially for drivers and field workers—so they can make informed decisions under pressure.



Safety Bulletin

Issue # 08-2025

ENERGY
SAFETY
CANADA

Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls in Cold Weather

Reducing the Risks

Slips, trips and falls are not just about individual actions—they reflect how work is organized and supported. Reduce risk by improving systems and learning from everyday work:

- Reporting hazards helps organizations understand where systems need support, not who made a mistake.
- Wearing the right footwear is a system-level decision, not just a personal one.
- Installing safeguards like handrails and establishing walkways supports human performance.
- Toolbox talks and safety audits are opportunities to learn how work is done and improve it together.

Looking for More?

Energy Safety Canada's [Performance Metrics Program](#) provides insights and reports on injuries and illnesses based on data from the Workers' Compensation Boards in Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan.



Resources

Energy Safety Canada

- ESC: [Get a Grip Program](#)
- ESC: [Falls on Same Level](#) (Bulletin)
- ESC: [Worker Fall From Same Level Injury](#) (Alert)

External Resources

- AB OHS: [Resources on Slips, Trips and Falls](#)
- WorkSafeBC: [Resources on Slips, Trips and Falls](#)
- WorkSafeSK: [Resources on Slips, Trips and Falls](#)