

The *BSO Plus Safety Topic* is a review designed from the BSO Plus agenda. This safety topic is your way to stay current on the safety information over the 3 years between BSO Plus and BSR.

## SLIPS, TRIPS, AND FALLS / HOUSEKEEPING

### SLIPS, TRIPS, & FALLS

#### Recognizing Slip, Trip & Fall Hazards

Certain conditions can lead to slips, trips and falls, not only in the workplace but also at home. Being aware of your surroundings can help you recognize when a slip, trip, or fall incident may occur. Some common causes of slips, trips, and falls are:

- Poor housekeeping conditions
- Wet or slippery surfaces
- Inappropriate footwear
- Poor lighting
- Environmental factors (ice, snow)
- Change in elevation (stairs and ramps)
- Change in work surface (soft ground, carpeting, tile, etc.)

In addition to these physical conditions, personal factors such as not being aware of your surroundings, rushing, taking short cuts, and texting while walking can lead to slips, trips and falls.



#### Preventing Slip, Trip & Fall Incidents

When a hazard has been identified, *the employer must take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect workers*. Employers must provide information, instruction and supervision to workers to protect their health and safety.

##### What workers can do:

- Before starting work, look around your work area to become familiar with your surroundings
- Don't walk backwards
- Keep the area at the top and base of ladders clear
- Pay attention to your footing when carrying things
- Walk, don't run
- Clean up after yourself
- Correct slip, trip, or fall hazards when you see them; or if you can't safely fix it yourself, you must report it to your supervisor [OHSA, s.28 (1)(c)(d)]

##### What employers and supervisors can do:

- Advise and train workers about risks
- Encourage workers to participate in the workplace's health and safety program through reporting of slip, trip and fall hazards
- Develop a housekeeping plan for the removal of debris from walkways, stairways, and work areas
- Give safety talks on housekeeping
- Keep building entrances clear
- Put down sand and salt in winter
- Instruct equipment operators to avoid driving on soft ground around designated walkways because the tires or tracks can create ruts in the ground
- Fill low-lying areas with gravel to reduce the accumulation of water, ice and mud
- Provide enough disposal bins around the jobsite to make it easy for workers to put their garbage in the right place



## Casino Workers Injured After Falling, Casino Rama Fined \$50,000

On December 5, 2016, a worker arrived at work and after parking, walked through the parking lot, slipped and fell. Other workers went to assist and one of them also slipped and fell. The workers were transported by ambulance to hospital where their injuries were deemed critical.

Investigation by the Ministry of Labour revealed that the area of the parking lot where the workers fell was covered with ice and snow and was very slippery. Surveillance footage of the area showed that seven other people had slipped on ice in this parking lot earlier in the day.

At the time of the accident, Casino Rama had a snow removal policy that included applying road salt in walkways and customer parking areas. However, the policy did not include applying road salt in the employee parking lot.

**Conviction:** Section 11(a) of Ontario Regulation 851 (the Industrial Establishments Regulation) requires that "a floor or other surface used by any worker shall be kept free of obstructions, hazards and accumulations of refuse, snow or ice."

## HOUSEKEEPING AT WORK



### What is housekeeping?

In the workplace, housekeeping means maintaining a safe work environment by storing everything in its proper place and removing any unnecessary items; it is a basic part of accident and fire prevention. Housekeeping includes keeping walkways and floors free of slip and trip hazards, storing materials and tools safely, and removing waste, such as packaging, from work areas.

### Why is housekeeping important?

First and foremost, housekeeping is a legal requirement. Certain regulations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* describe the proper maintenance of floor conditions and aisle ways, lighting, machinery, equipment, and materials storage. However, the importance of effective housekeeping goes beyond the legal requirements. It can eliminate some workplace hazards and help get a job done safely and efficiently. Good housekeeping habits at work can benefit both the employer and the workers through:

- Reduced potential for exposure to hazardous substances (dusts, vapours, etc.)
- Better control of tools and materials including inventory and supplies
- Fewer slip/trip/fall incidents in clutter-free and spill-free work areas
- Decreased fire hazards
- Improved productivity – the right tools and materials for the job will be easy to find
- More efficient use of work space
- Better morale in clean, comfortable work areas



### How can we establish good housekeeping habits?

We all have a responsibility to keep our workplace safe. Here are some common housekeeping practices:

- Identify and use proper locations to store items (equipment, tools, chemicals, supplies, etc.)
- Clean up after yourself throughout the workday
- Keep the floors and walkways in your work area free of slip and trip hazards
- Properly dispose of waste
- Report any housekeeping issues that you can't correct to your supervisor