SAFETY AWARENESS

Brief Topic Safety Refresher Training For Associates

Avoiding Slips and Falls at the Jobsite

On any given day, the injury rate for plumbers is higher than the national average for all other industries. Following these basic slip and fall prevention tips can help prevent you from becoming a statistic.

Do Your Safety Part

There are various ways to suffer slips and falls while working. You can slip and lose your balance, trip over objects left improperly in a walkway or fall from a ladder or scaffolding. To avoid these mishaps, be on the lookout for tripping hazards such as the following:

- Water puddles
- Worksite materials
- Grease or oil
- Sawdust
- Extension cords and cables
- Even small quantities are enough to make you fall.

Good Housekeeping Counts

When entering a building from the outdoors or from debris areas, clean your footwear thoroughly. Snowy and rainy weather require a doormat at each entrance to allow for complete wiping of shoes.

Beware of tripping hazards—trash, unused materials or any object left in walkways invites falls. Extension cords, tools, carts and other items should be removed or properly barricaded off. If equipment or supplies are left in walkways, report it. Let the proper personnel remove it. And keep passageways clean of debris by using trash barrels and recycling bins.

Practice Prevention

Walk in designated walking areas. Concentrate on where you are going—horseplay or short cuts through the job site invites accidents. If you're carrying a heavy load that hampers your ability to see properly, request spotting assistance from a co-worker.

The worst falls are from elevated positions such as ladders, and can result in serious injury or death. Learn and practice ladder safety and the proper use of scaffolding. For example, when climbing, use a ladder of proper length that is in good condition. Keep it placed on a firm surface. Do not climb a ladder placed on machinery, crates, stock or boxes. Keep the ladder's base one foot away from the wall for every four feet of height. Don't over-reach. Always have control of your balance when working from a ladder. Never climb a ladder with your hands full, and always transport tools in their proper carrying devices.

When using scaffolding, be sure it is properly assembled according to the manufacturer's specifications. Check carefully for defects. Standing and working planks should be level and clean. Use toe boards to prevent tools from falling and workers from slipping. Report any misuse of proper scaffolding safety.

Slips and falls occur every day. The extent of injuries and their recurrence can be minimized through proper safety knowledge, good housekeeping and practicing prevention.

Mounting and Dismounting Equipment

Because jumping down off vehicles is a common practice for contractor employees, it's no surprise that lower back, knee, ankle and neck injuries occur more frequently. Regardless of the type of equipment you work with, mounting and dismounting safely should always be top of mind.

What You Can Do

To lessen your risk of injuries, follow these simple mounting and dismounting instructions for trucks and other tall equipment or machinery.

- When using a new piece of machinery, become familiar with proper mounting and dismounting procedures.
- When a person jumps from a height of more than one foot, the force that goes through the body is about 14 times the person's body weight. In other words, a 165-pound man who jumps out of equipment or any other high surface is exerting 2,310 pounds of force on his body. This can cause injury to bones, tendons, and cartilage. And if you're doing this multiple times every workday, the damage to the body can be extensive.
- When dismounting and mounting, maintain three-point contact. This means having contact with the equipment by either one foot and two hands or one hand and two feet. The smaller the triangle you form with your body, the more stable you are.
- Always face the vehicle, both when mounting and dismounting.
- Look at the surface below before stepping and make sure it is even to prevent ankle and knee injuries.
- Never mount or dismount moving equipment.
- Do not mount or dismount with anything, including tools, in your hands. Not only does it throw the body off-balance, it also reduces your chance of recovering your balance if you do slip. Use a drop rope to raise and lower supplies, tools and equipment instead.
- Wear appropriate clothing. Loose or torn clothing can get caught on equipment when you are jumping down instead of climbing down. In slippery conditions, wear proper footwear to prevent slipping hazards.

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