



Make Fall Safety a Top Priority

It may come as a surprise that the third leading cause of unintentional injury-related death in adults, depending on the industry, falls can be the leading cause of death.

Hazards in the Workplace

In 2014, 660 workers died in falls from a higher level, and 49,210 were injured badly enough to require days off of work. A worker doesn't have fall from a high level to suffer fatal injuries. While half of all fatal falls in 2014 occurred from 20 feet or lower, 12% were from less than 6 feet, according to *Injury Facts 2017*®.

Construction workers are most at risk for fatal falls from height – more than seven times the rate of other industries – but falls can happen anywhere, even at a "desk job."

NSC data for 2014 includes falls from height and falls on the same level, by industry:

- Construction: 22,330 injuries, 359 deaths
- Manufacturing: 23,290 injuries, 49 deaths
- Wholesale trade: 14,360 injuries, 30 deaths
- Retail trade: 29,530 injuries, 34 deaths
- Transportation and Warehousing: 23,780 injuries, 43 deaths
- Professional and business services: 23,140 injuries, 94 deaths
- Education and health services: 51,150 injuries, 21 deaths
- Government: 69,530 injuries, 41 deaths

Falls are 100% Preventable

Whether working from a ladder, roof or scaffolding, it's important to plan ahead, assess the risk and use the right equipment. First, determine if working from a height is absolutely necessary or if there is another way to do the task safely.

- Discuss the task with coworkers and determine what safety equipment is needed
- Make sure you are properly trained on how to use the equipment
- Scan the work area for potential hazards before starting the job
- Make sure you have level ground to set up the equipment
- If working outside, check the weather forecast; never work in inclement weather
- Use the correct tool for the job, and use it as intended
- Ensure stepladders have a locking device to hold the front and back open
- Always keep two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand on the ladder
- Place the ladder on a solid surface and never lean it against an unstable surface
- A straight or extension ladder should be 1 foot away from the surface it rests on for every 4 feet of height and extend at least 3 feet over the top edge
- Securely fasten straight and extension ladders to an upper support
- Wear slip-resistant shoes and don't stand higher than the third rung from the top
- Don't lean or reach while on a ladder, and have someone support the bottom
- Never use old or damaged equipment; check thoroughly before use

Millions of people are treated in emergency rooms for fall-related injuries every year. A fall can end in death or disability in a split second, but with a few simple precautions, you'll be sure stay safe at work.

The Importance of Signage to Prevent Slips, Trips and Falls



From the office to the construction site, fall risk affects every workplace.

The focus for National Safety Month this week is work-related slip, trip and fall (STF) incidents, which can result in serious or disabling injuries, lost workdays and reduced productivity. Falls on the same level are the second leading type of preventable injury at work and affect every industry and workplace.

Being prepared with the right signage is an important first step in preventing STF.

On a recent customer visit, a maintenance manager explained just how effective signage can be. The ice machine in the organization's cafeteria was leaking, and it took a while to get the leak under control. With the high volume of foot traffic in that area, leadership needed to act fast. By placing fold-up signs around the perimeter of the spill until the water was cleaned up, everyone who walked into that space was immediately made aware of the issue.

Think about potential hazards in your workspace. If you don't have signage like this on hand, now is a good time to stock up. Effective signage helps prevent injuries, industry violations and higher insurance premiums.

There are many types of warning signs you may want to consider adding to your arsenal, including chemical and physical hazard, and facilities maintenance signage. Now is also a good time to brush up on guidelines and best practices for signage.

Standards

Becoming familiar with relevant guidelines and requirements can help you identify any signage gaps that might exist in your workspace. OSHA regulation 29 CFR 1910.145 is the [guideline for signs](#) and tags that identify hazards, and includes design requirements and specifications for safety sign use. The ANSI Z535 standard [expands upon these elements](#), adding alert symbols and pictograms that communicate hazards. ANSI Z535 dictates standard sign and label colors, signal words ("Danger," "Warning"), font style and size, and placement.

Sign Placement

Safety signage is important, but unless it exists in the proper environment in the facility, it won't be obvious or helpful to people passing by. The placement of a sign can have a big impact on its effectiveness; it's the primary factor in a sign's [visibility](#).

Think about the visual space as divided into three tiers:

- Above one's head (78 inches, or 6.5 feet above the floor)
- At eye-level (45 to 66 inches, or 4 to 5.5 feet above the floor)
- Less than knee-height (4 to 18 inches above the floor)

Location and emergency equipment signage placed at 78 inches high are visible from a distance and to those looking up. "Danger," "Warning" and "Caution" signs are most effective at eye-level and where employees perform tasks or operate equipment. To maintain visibility even under smoky conditions, place wayfinding signs and path-markers on the floor, or no higher than 18 inches.

Words and Colors

High-contrast safety signs are a good way to prevent safety sign "blind spots." Signage with bold type, bright colors and thick borders are more likely to capture workers' attention. The symbols, lettering and background colors should be determined by the severity of the hazard.

OSHA/ANSI Hazard Classification	Safety Alert Symbol?	Signal Word Lettering	Background Color
Danger: Death or serious injury	Yes	White	Red
Warning: Reduced risk of death or serious injury	Yes	Black	Orange
Caution: Risk of minor or moderate injury	Yes	Black	Yellow (header)
Notice: Pictograms for work practices	No	Black	White (blue header)
Exit Signs	No	Red	White
Directional Signs	No	Black	White (black panel)

Standardized and customized signs also can provide consistency throughout work locations and reinforce your company's brand identity and core values. [Safety graphics](#) can help motivate employees, create a culture of pride, and communicate trust, belonging and caring.

Beyond OSHA compliance, injury prevention, instruction and direction, safety signage can help to create a positive work environment for all.

Readers may please note that D. L. Shah Trust brings out two e-journals on a fortnightly basis. These are mailed to those persons or institutions who are desirous of receiving them:

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1. Safety Info
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