WEEK 40 EARLY OCTOBER · ~5 MIN READ · ONTARIO CONSTRUCTION

Slips, Trips & Falls

A slip or a trip doesn't sound dramatic. A foot catches a trailing cord or slides on a wet plank, a hand goes out to break the fall, and now there's a wrenched shoulder or a broken wrist. It's the most ordinary hazard on site and the one most often left to "watch your step."

The hazard

Two different things happen. You **slip** when a surface takes your traction — wet, icy, greasy, dusty. You **trip** when something catches your foot — a cord, a curb, an off-cut, uneven ground, a hole. A construction site supplies both all day: trailing leads, scattered material, mud, changing floor levels, and less light as autumn comes on.

Ontario is specific about the housekeeping side. **Waste and debris have to be removed as often as needed to prevent a hazard, and at least once a day**, and **work areas and the routes to them have to be kept clear of obstructions and of snow, ice, or other slippery material at all times**, with sand or similar where footing needs it. That's a continuing duty, not an end-of-week tidy.

What to do

- **Work clean as you go, and clear it at least daily.** The daily removal is the floor, not the target — if a pile is a hazard at ten in the morning, it goes at ten in the morning.
- **Give the walking routes an owner.** Someone inspects and re-treats the paths, stairs, ramps, and platforms as conditions change, and closes anything that can't be made safe yet.
- **Get cords and hoses out of the walking route.** Route them along the edge or overhead on supports rated for it, following the site plan — without creating a new overhead hazard, blocking an exit, or hanging a lead off something electrical.
- **Check your tread.** Smooth, worn soles slide on wet steel, wood, and mud. If the tread's gone, replace the boots before winter, not after the fall.
- **Deal with slick surfaces:** wipe up spills, grit what you can't dry, and test your footing on wet plank and steel before you commit your weight.
- **Light the path.** Areas where people work and the ways in and out have to be adequately lit, and that gets harder every week from here.
- **Keep your hands free for balance and rails** — hoist or bag tools rather than carrying an armful. Don't count on catching yourself; that's how wrists go.

Watch out for

- Carrying a load you can't see your feet over.
- The "I walk this way every day" autopilot — familiar routes are where people stop looking.
- Moving fast across a slick or cluttered surface to save a minute.
- A cord run across a walkway "just for this task" that's still there next week.

Talk it over

- Which paths on this site are cluttered or slick right now, and who's clearing them today?
- Where do cords and hoses cross a walking route, and how do we get them out of it properly?

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