Safety Matters

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News & Notes

HOW TO STAY ON YOUR FEET, PREVENT FALLS

Slipping, tripping, and just plain losing your balance can lead you to the emergency room.

To avoid being one of the 14,000 who die each year in a fall, consider these tips on how to avoid falls at home:

Pick up. Check your normal path through various rooms. Move or get rid of anything that you could trip over or bump into so you don't lose your balance. Make it a habit to pick up anything not designed to be left on the floor, like magazines and newspapers. But most trips in the home are because of throw rugs. Ask yourself if preventing carpet wear is a good tradeoff for a visit to the emergency room.

Light up. Keep low-voltage night lights burning so you don't trip over your shoes or your cat on your way to the bathroom. Always turn the lights on when going down stairs at night so you don't misjudge your footing or trip on something left on a step.

Mop up. The age-old advice about immediately cleaning up spills or water tracked into the entry way is still good.

Gear up. Even the young and heathy appreciate a grab bar in the shower. Others appreciate one by the toilet. Put hand rails on both sides of stairs.

Fix up. Repair anything that could lead to a fall, like a loose step.

Shape up. Your general physical condition counts in fall prevention. Keeping strong with regular exercise will help you stay up if you begin to fall. Ask your doctor to change a medication if it makes you feel weak or dizzy.

"Mom, when you need parenting help, do you call grandma for tech support?"

Score One for Safety

How do you rate on slips, trips, and falls?

How effectively do you help to prevent slips, trips, and falls in the workplace? Rate yourself by circling the appropriate number following each statement below, where 4 = Always, 3 = Usually, 2 = Sometimes, 1 = Rarely, and 0 = Never.

• I report any slip, trip, and fall hazards I can't correct.	4 3 2 1 0
• I pay attention to where I'm going and walk rather than run.	4 3 2 1 0
• I report lighting problems.	4 3 2 1 0
• I avoid blocking walkways with materials or equipment.	4 3 2 1 0
• I avoid leaving cords or power cables in walkways.	4 3 2 1 0
• I avoid leaving drawers open.	4 3 2 1 0
• I wear shoes with nonskid soles.	4 3 2 1 0
• I avoid blocking my vision when carrying items.	4 3 2 1 0
• I pick up items I see on the floor.	4 3 2 1 0
• I clean up spills right away.	4 3 2 1 0
• I avoid placing any items on stairs.	4 3 2 1 0
• I avoid standing on the top two steps of a stepladder or the top three rungs of a straight or extension ladder.	4 3 2 1 0
• I avoid placing a ladder on boxes or barrels to gain height.	4 3 2 1 0
• I avoid using a box or chair in place of a ladder.	4 3 2 1 0
• I set up ladders correctly.	4 3 2 1 0
• I allow only one person on the ladder at a time.	4 3 2 1 0
• I face the ladder when climbing, and hold rails with both hands.	4 3 2 1 0
• I carry tools and materials in a belt or hoist them up once I'm up.	4 3 2 1 0
• I keep one hand on the ladder while I work and never overreach.	4 3 2 1 0
• I inspect ladders before each use.	4 3 2 1 0

TOTAL SCORE: _____

Evaluate your score:

80— Excellent performance that will help prevent slips, trips, and falls on the job and minimize the risk of injuries.

60-80—Good performance, but you could do more to ensure everyone's safety.

40-60—Performance needs improvement. Either you're not aware of the serious nature of the risks, or you're not making the effort to eliminate slip, trip, and fall hazards.

Below 40—If you don't pay more attention to the hazards soon, you could be responsible for an accident.

RIDDLES OF THE MONTH

1) What is the only 15 letter word in English that can be spelled without repeating any letter?
2) When can you add 2 to 11 and get 1 as the correct answer?
3) Something extraordinary happened on May 6, 1978 at 12:34. What was it?
4) What is bought by the yard, worn by the foot?

Answers on page 2 Safety Bits & Pieces

SAFETY TIPS OF THE MONTH

Consider these spring safety tips:

1) If you're planning on doing some spring cleaning, choose nontoxic products, such as a mixture of vinegar and water—it's an effective window cleaning solution.
2) If you've finished your spring cleaning for the year, take one final step by walking your home and taking note of any needed repairs—especially those that could become safety hazards.
3) If you have a play structure or other playground equipment installed in your yard, consider installing soft, cushioned surfacing underneath in case of falls and regularly check for exposed chains, cracks or other broken parts.

Safety Bits & Pieces

HAVE YOU EVER…?

Accidents are caused by either unsafe conditions or unsafe acts. Furthermore, safety experts agree that most workplace accidents are caused by unsafe acts. In other words, by things we do, things we can control.

Have you ever been guilty of committing an unsafe act on the job? For example, have you ever:

- Failed to follow proper housekeeping procedures and let hazards accumulate?
- Ignored a safety rule to save time or effort?
- Failed to report a safety hazard?
- Operated equipment without proper training or authorization?
- Used defective tools or equipment or used them improperly?
- Failed to pay attention to a safety sign or instruction?
- Operated equipment at an unsafe speed?
- Removed or bypassed equipment safety guards or devices?
- Failed to wear required personal protective equipment?
- Engaged in horseplay?
- Used a chair instead of a ladder to reach something on a high shelf?
- Failed to clean up a liquid spill that could be a slipping hazard or failed to pick up items that could be tripping hazards because "you didn't put them there"?

DID YOU KNOW ?

University of Maryland researchers say that between 2004 to 2011, the number of American pedestrians killed by trains and cars tripled. Car drivers and locomotive engineers said the pedestrians were oblivious to the impending collision. Audio players can distract users' attention with their dials and functions. As reported in ***Time***, they also put listeners into a sensory cocoon, making them unaware of hazards like traffic or warning sirens and horns.

RIDDLES OF THE MONTH ANSWERS

1) Uncopyrightable
2) When you add 2 hours to 11 o'clock to get 1 o'clock.
3) At that moment, the time and date could be written as 12:34 5/6/78.
4) Carpet

Don't Gamble with Safety

Make sure the odds are in your favor

We all like to get our work done without unnecessary effort. Sometimes this attitude makes you more productive and helps you find better ways of getting things done. But other times, such as when it leads you to take a shortcut, it can put you on a direct route to trouble.

Take the case of a worker on a ladder who was almost finished with the job except for a little bit that could be done by reaching farther than he knew was safe. It was decision time. Should he get down and move the ladder and climb up again or save all that effort by taking a chance and overreaching?

You can imagine the possible outcomes of taking the shortcut. He could be lucky and finish the job without any trouble. Or leaning too far to the side could cause the ladder to topple and the worker to fall, resulting in a concussion, a broken leg, or a broken neck.

One way the odds are 100 to 1 in your favor. The other way, it's just gambling. You can never be sure what will happen when you take a shortcut. Risking your neck to save a few minutes or a little effort is always a bad bet.

Never gamble with your safety. Always follow procedures. They're designed to protect you. If they take a little longer, that's a small price to pay for safety.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

"We're worried about you. Your teacher called and said you're actually handing in your homework instead of eating it."

QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

"Time flies over us, but leaves its shadow behind."

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804 - 1864)
American novelist/short story writer

From the State of Delaware's Office of Highway Safety...

Get the Facts about Cell Phones

Did you know that 13,000 citations were issued statewide to people using a hand-held cell phone while driving in 2012? For some, using a cell phone, smart phone, or other electronic device is part of daily life. We depend on this technology not only for communication, but for a variety of other reasons that make it difficult to put it down, even for a short period of time. But there is risk involved with being distracted while you are behind the wheel.

OHS would like to remind you that using a cell-phone or other device while driving is a dangerous and potential deadly combination.

- Nationally, distracted driving is responsible for 3,000 deaths a year.
- Cell phone related crashes in Delaware trend young. 54% of these crashes are caused by a person under the age of 30.
- Of people under 30, males account for 60% of the crashes and females account for 40%.
- Data shows that cell phone related crashes increase around lunch time and between 1 – 2 am, when bars close.

Delaware has primary laws that prohibit ALL drivers from texting, or using handheld cell phones while driving unless they employ a hands-free device. Having a "primary law" means that an officer can ticket the driver for the offense without any other traffic violation taking place. Since the average fine is over $100, it is best to turn off the phone and put it away until you have reached your destination. If you need to make a call or send a message, pull off the road to a safe location.

Remember, if you have a cell phone in one hand, you may have a ticket in the other.

For more information about Delaware's cell phone law, see www.ohs.delaware.gov/cellphone.
You can also find more information about distracted driving at www.distraction.gov .

Drive Safe. Arrive Alive DE