



## Stairs Safety

Stairways are a common walking surface in most workplaces and even in our everyday lives. However, falls from stairs can lead to serious injuries. Because many of us use stairways often, it doesn't seem like a risky venture to "take the stairs" when it is something that is very normal to most of us. The safer we feel doing an activity, the more we ignore the risk. The majority of stairway workplace incidents occur when someone is not paying attention, when they are rushing, or when they are not watching their footing.

Some injuries that can be caused by stairs can include:

- Cuts, scrapes, and bruises.
- Sprained tendons, ligaments, and muscles.
- Fractured bones.
- Whiplash, neck, and back injuries.
- Head injuries, concussions, and other traumatic brain injuries.
- Soft tissue injuries.

According to OSHA standard 1910.28(b)(11)(i) , stairs must have handrails and stairway landings that are 4 feet or more above a lower level must be protected by a guardrail or rail system.

It is important to follow these basic safety tips when using the stairs:

- Always use the handrail when going up or down the stairs. The handrail can help you keep your balance or prevent you from falling if you do slip or trip. Do not use the handrail to slide down or swing from the stairs.
- Keep at least one hand free when using the handrail. If you need to carry something, make sure it is not too heavy, bulky, or awkward if it blocks your vision or affects your balance. Use a backpack or dolly to transport your items if possible. If you need assistance, ask a coworker or manager/supervisor for help.
- Pay attention to your surroundings. Do not use your phone, headphones, or other devices that have the potential to distract you or impair your hearing or vision. Do not rush to take the stairs, even if you are in a hurry. Take one step at a time and watch your footing.
- Keep the stairs and landings clear. Do not leave trash, debris, or slippery substances on the stairs. If you do find trash, debris, or slip hazards, report them to your manager/supervisor immediately.
- Do not use damaged, wet, or icy stairways until they are fixed or cleaned.
- Make sure all stairways have sufficient lighting. Poor lighting can lead to low visibility and make it hard to see where the next step is. Report any lighting issues to your manager/supervisor.
- Wear appropriate footwear for the job. Choose shoes that are comfortable, fit well, and have good traction. Avoid wearing shoes that are too loose, tight, have heels, or any straps or laces that can get caught in the stairs. Keep your shoelaces tied and tucked in.

It seems like a simple task to walk up or down the stairs, and most people are often trying to do something else at the same time. Always avoid distractions while walking down the stairs. Remember, stair injuries can be serious, and sometimes life-threatening. Unlike some exposures, stair hazards or slippery walkways can appear overnight. Take action to remedy the problem when you see it.

**KEEP SAFETY IN MIND!!!!**